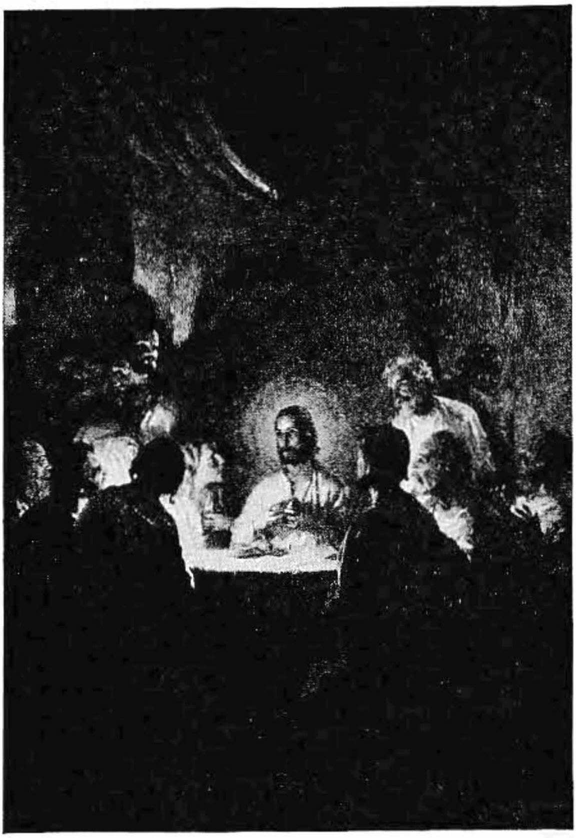
The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass



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"THIS IS MY BODY."

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

A TEXT FOR RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION CLUBS

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✠ JAMES A. McNULTY,
Bishop of Paterson.

March 25, 1957

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DEDICATED WITH PROFOUND RESPECT
TO ALL TEACHERS WHO HELP US TO KNOW
THAT THE MASS
IS A SACRIFICE TO BE OFFERED
AND A MYSTERY TO BE LIVED
WHICH UNITES US
WITH OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN
AND THAT THIS BRIGHT UNION
SEALED BY THE BLOOD OF HIS ONLY SON
CAN BE TRUSTED TO SUPPORT US
IN BOTH JOY AND SADNESS
FOR TIME
AND FOR ETERNITY

PRAYER TO
OUR LADY OF GOOD STUDIES

(Recommended to be said before discussion club meetings)

O MOST holy Virgin Mary, who in giving birth to our Saviour Jesus didst shed eternal light upon the world! O Mother of divine knowledge, through whose pious intercession it has been granted that innumerable rude and ignorant minds should make marvelous progress in learning and piety! I choose thee for the mistress and patron of my own studies.

Through thy intercession, O Mother of good studies, may the Holy Spirit fill my soul with light and strength, discretion and humility. May He bestow on me a right will, understanding, memory, sufficient readiness of expression, above all, docility of mind and heart, so that in everything I may be able to make progress in accordance with the counsels of divine Wisdom.

Defend me, good Mother, against the spirit of pride, presumption, vain curiosity and inconstancy; preserve me from all scandal, from all error and from all those persons who might corrupt my faith, or disturb the clearness of my intellect, the purity of my heart, the peace of my soul.

Grant, O Mary, that under thy protection, ever submissive to the guidance and teaching of our Mother the Church, I may be able to walk with safety, courage and constancy in the way of truth and virtue, and come at length to the knowledge, love and possession of Jesus Christ, our Lord, thy Son. Amen.

500 days. Pius X, April 26, 1907.

1. DISCUSSION AIDS are based exclusively on the content of the Lessons they follow. Where possible, paragraph headings are repeated in the Discussion Aids. These headings are italicized to designate the section of the Lesson in which replies are to be found.

2. DISCUSSION is a coöperative effort in which both leader and members take an active part. Discussion literally means "to shake apart." This shaking apart is done by talking. The purpose of directed discussion is to clarify and correlate information, to develop the habit of talking accurately and effectively, but chiefly to relate religious truths to daily living.

3. THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR (a priest) encourages leaders and members of all clubs in a parish, occasionally visits each group and gives decisions on any questions that arise.

4. A LEADER (in adult clubs, a member of the group) directs the discussion from the Discussion Aids.

5. A SECRETARY (a member of the group) calls the roll, and notes in writing and refers to the Spiritual Director questions that cannot be decided by the group.

6. MEMBERS of the discussion group vary in number from six to twelve. Each has a copy of *The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* and a Missal. Both should be brought to every meeting; in addition, a copy of the Bible, or at least the New Testament (in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine revision, since this is used in the text), should be available at meetings. Members should feel a strict obligation to arrive on time.

7. METHOD. Members in turn read aloud a passage apiece from the text while the rest follow silently. The leader then directs the discussion from the Discussion Aids.

Outside study may add to the interest of the meeting, but it is not essential. If it is insisted upon, the attendance will probably be reduced.

For further information see *The Religious Discussion Club,* a practical reference for leaders (available from Confraternity Publications, 508 Marshall Street, Paterson 3, N. J.; 10c).

FOREWORD TO THE LEADER

The center from which this series of lessons has been developed pedagogically is the individual. The text endeavors, as far as it may do so, to awaken the separate, personal interest of each member of the discussion group. The means used in this attempt are:

1. Instruction, recapitulation and drill which will engrave deep in the individual's consciousness the externals and the ceremonies of the Mass insofar as they are directly connected with the Sacrifice of the Cross. These actions having become familiar and meaningful, the mind will then be left spiritually free during Mass for that intimate union with Christ which is the essence of the Mass of the Faithful.

2. In addition to instruction *about* the Mass, instruction which will show the individual *how to pray the Mass* through the use of the Prayerbook of the Church: the Missal.

3. Indication of the necessity for the active participation of the faithful in the Mass, as the supreme *corporate* act of worship directed to God.

4. Indication of the *individual's* responsibilities toward others because of this participation of all the members of Christ's Mystical Body in the Supreme Sacrifice. In this way the Mass is shown to be the foundation of Catholic Action.

5. Indication of the importance of the lessons of the Mass in the personal life of the individual: that is, the Mass considered as a school of worship, charity and sacrifice.

6. Introduction of interesting liturgical and historical notes which take the individual into the confidence of the developing Church, and make the matter of the text real and eventful.

Briefly, the objective of this book has been to lead the individual to see every part of the Mass — every action, every word, every object of its liturgy — as the highest expression of man's religious life. The Mass is presented, it is hoped, in the healing light of eternity and of our final end.

To be complete Catholics we must all *live* this mystery of the Mass, and we can do so only by opening our eyes, ears, lips, mind and soul to everything with which it is clothed. We must, in the words of a French mystic, increase "our capacity for the Infinite."

May God bless the generous and noble work of all who have dedicated themselves to the aims which this book attempts to serve.

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UNIT ONE:

Sacrifice in General, and the Mass

LESSON I

MEANING AND PURPOSE OF SACRIFICE

SINCE the Sacrifice of the Mass is the supreme act of worship of Christian life and the center of our religion, it is important that we know in what sacrifice consists.

This lesson, therefore, will discuss various forms of sacrifice, illustrating the fact that sacrifice has been part of nearly all religions from the very earliest times. All developed religions, with the exception of Buddhism, Mohammedanism and Protestantism, accept some form of sacrifice as part of their ritual. We shall examine and compare various types of sacrifice until we have eliminated the false and brought the one true sacrifice into the light of our understanding.

Pagan Forms of Sacrifice

(a) Indian

Religion as sacrifice was developed among pagans most extensively by the Vedics of India. At first they looked upon sacrifice as a food-offering to the gods, but in time their sacrifice became a kind of magic by which they believed they could get power or influence over the gods. The gods in this view became man's servants; indeed the highpriests, because of their mastery of sacrificial ceremonies, were regarded as divine, and the gods were even thought to owe their existence to them.

Hinduism differs from Vedism chiefly in the fact that it has a temple service with songs of praise characterized by piety and elevated feeling. However, much of Hinduism has degenerated into black superstition.

The ancient Iranians had a religion of moral observance which found its center in the worship of the god whom they called Ahura Mazda. Mazda's kingdom was supposed to be the world of the good, as opposed to the world of evil; his worship, before it degenerated, influenced the Iranians to live a life of purity and to renounce wrongdoing. Sacrifice and prayer were considered means of obtaining help in the battle of the good against the evil. As in the religion of the Vedics, an intoxicating drink was offered to their god.

(b) Greek and Roman

The principal object of Greek worship was to gain favors from the gods through prayer, offerings and sacrifice. Sometimes the articles of food used in sacrifice were consumed at great banquets held in honor of the gods; usually the offerings were burned. During periods of famine, great sorrow and wars, human sacrifices might be made.

The Romans developed an elaborate hierarchy of greater and lesser gods supposed to govern practically every condition and action of life. As in so many other ancient religions, the chief purpose of Roman worship and sacrifice was to win the friendship of the gods and to avoid their ill-will. Sacrifices of expiation for crime were not uncommon, however.

(c) The Chinese

Six centuries before Christ, Confucius gave the Chinese their sacrificial system, which has been in effect ever since. The emperor was the head of this system, and only he could offer sacrifice to heaven. This religion has always been characterized by idolatry.

Buddhism also has been in China for many centuries, and though it does not in theory admit sacrifice, in practice it sometimes borrows this element from Confucianism.

(d) The Egyptians

The Egyptians built temples which were intended only for divine worship. No one but the priests and the king were allowed in their sanctuaries. In the daily temple service, every part of the ceremony was strictly regulated according to an established liturgy. Evidence of human sacrifice among the Egyptians has come down to us. It is said that the rulers of Egypt once bankrupted the country by making many and costly offerings to the god Ammon-Ra. With the passing of time, Egyptian religion degenerated into a worship of animals.

(e) The Semites

The Semites best known to us are the Jews, but there were other Semitic races which, unlike the Jews, practised idolatrous religions. In Babylonia a caste of priests was set apart from the general population as mediators between gods and men. In Assyria, as in China, the king was the highpriest and only he could offer sacrifice. Burnt offerings of incense, foodstuffs and animals were made by both Babylonians and Assyrians. An important note of the Semitic idea was that sacrifice was made to the gods as their due, and the sacrificial banquet united those partaking of it to the deity. The Semites held that sacrifice purified them and helped them atone for their sins, and that the animal sacrificed was a substitute for man himself. Penitential psalms expressing a strong sense of sin and unworthiness were also used by the ancient Babylonians.

The religion of the Chanaanites was a cult of horrible degeneracy. Hill-worship was common because the people felt that the higher they built their temples the closer they came to their deity. On these hills altars for bloody sacrifices were built. The god Moloch was thought to be appeased by the sacrifice of little children. In the Bible you will find stern condemnation of this practice.

The Phoenicians had a similar worship. Their idea of deity was so low that the Romans made every effort to have the religion eliminated. Human beings were sacrificed, and acts of sensuality and cruelty were numerous.

The Sacrifices of the Old Law

The Jewish religion was a supernatural religion, and the sacrifices which it used were prescribed by God Himself. They were, therefore, the most perfect sacrifices in the world before the coming of the One True Sacrifice of our Lord on the Cross, and its continuation in Holy Mass.

The Book of Leviticus prescribes the types and the ritual of the Jewish sacrifices. In general, there were two kinds: (1) bloody, or slain offerings, and (2) unbloody, or meat and drink offerings. According to the reasons for offering the sacrifices, they were divided into: (1) holocausts, or burnt offerings — a lamb officially sacrificed twice daily, and others offered on particular occasions, such as childbirth, cure of leprosy, etc.; (2) peace offerings — voluntary sacrifices made out of love of God; (3) sin offerings — made in atonement for certain national transgressions and on the principal feasts of the year; (4) trespass offerings — made in atonement for individual faults.

Through figure and prophecy the Old Testament paved the way for the New Testament. In the sacrifices of the Old Law we can see a foreshadowing of the greatest, the supremely acceptable Sacrifice of all — the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary. At times God showed His acceptance of the offering by sending fire from heaven which consumed it.

All through the sacrifices of the Old Law two things stand out:

1. Man's deep desire for the friendship of Almighty God;
2. God's comforting and encouraging answer in return.

Thus Abel offered his Creator the finest animals of his flock, and in return God assured him that the sacrifice was acceptable.

When Noe came out of the ark, he built an altar upon which to offer unspotted victims in thanksgiving to the Lord, and God accepted his sacrifice in a visible way.

Of great importance was the Jewish Pasch, or Passover — a sacrifice in memory of the deliverance of the people from the Egyptians. Yet the deliverance of the Jews from bondage was itself a foretelling, or figure, of *our deliverance from the punishment due us for sin.* God Himself, like the destroying angel, was to deliver mankind from the slavery of sin by the death of His Son. Thus the chief sacrifice of the year, the Pasch, foretold the Redemption which our Mass daily commemorates.

The old sacrifices had, in Saint Paul's words, "but a shadow of the good things to come, and not the exact image of the objects." The righteous Jews knew that their sacrifices could not give all that would later be given. Behind the veil of their rites and ceremonies they sensed the perfect sacrifice to come, and were happy in their expectation of the fullness of it.

The Six Marks of a True Sacrifice

True sacrifice has six distinguishing marks by which we may know it. These marks are:

First, an external, visible sign, united to internal devotion. In the Old Testament these visible signs, or objects of sacrifice, were lambs, goats, doves, oil, bread, salt, wine and other articles. God willed that men should offer such things to Him in order that the external sacrifice might lift their hearts to Him. By offering a visible sacrifice, we serve God with our body as well as with heart and soul and mind. The strength and skill of the body are gifts from God. The fruits of the earth are also gifts from God. It is therefore logical that, in serving God, we employ the whole of our nature and environment.

During the Babylonian captivity, Azarias cried out, longing to make sacrifice to God for deliverance of his people: "Neither is there at this time prince, or leader, or prophet, or holocaust, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place of first fruits before Thee, that we might find Thy mercy" (Daniel 3:38, 39). However, Azarias continued: "Nevertheless in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted . . . "; thus indicating that, without internal devotion, the external offering is worthless.

The *second* mark of a true sacrifice is that *it must be offered to God alone.* Honor is shown to God in many ways, as by genuflecting, bowing and prostrating. But such actions are also offered to men in high offices. Sacrifice, however, cannot be made to any creature. We cannot offer sacrifice to the angels, to the most beloved and honored saints, not even to the Blessed Virgin, who is the Mother of God. It is an act reserved for God alone. When we sacrifice, we acknowledge that the one to whom we sacrifice is divine. Hence if, through sacrifice, we impute divinity to a creature, we commit the sin of idolatry. Moses said: "Whoever sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD alone, shall be doomed" (Exodus 22:19).

The *third* mark of true sacrifice is that *it must be offered in acknowledgment that God is the highest authority, and in profession of our complete submission to Him.* Ordinary eating of food for purposes of health or life has no value before God. But when food is consumed as a sign of worship of God, from a contrite heart which acknowledges Him as our Creator, our Preserver and our Redeemer, and in expression of our submission to Him, then it becomes filled with merit for our salvation and is a true sacrifice.

The *fourth* mark of a true sacrifice is that *it must be offered by a priest and presented by him to God for and in the name of the people.* Even peoples who had only natural religions — that is, all except the Jews and the Christians — had a priesthood, the essential idea of which was someone in authority who alone had the power to offer sacrifice. Sometimes in early days, this person was the lord of the household or head of the family or tribe. Moses ordained that only those of the blood of Aaron could hold priestly positions. We have already mentioned the priesthood of the pagan rites. All agreed that a gift placed on the altar by an individual not a priest would not be a sacrifice.

The *fifth* essential of a true sacrifice is *the purification of the victim through prescribed external ceremonies as a preparation before the offering*. Before this preparation, the offering is of time and of the earth, and for the use of man. After these ceremonies it becomes "a pure oblation, unsullied, consecrated and belonging to God." The Old Testament priest took the bread or the blood of the victim in his hands, lifted it to heaven, and then put it on the altar with certain prescribed ceremonies before the sacrifice itself.

The *sixth,* and last, essential of a true sacrifice is that *the victim offered must be partially or entirely destroyed*. Every act of adoration expresses the thought that God is the First Source and the Final End of all things. This sentiment is represented visibly when the offering is destroyed upon its presentation to God. In the Old Law, the animal offered was burned to ashes; the blood and wine of the sacrifice were poured on the ground; food offerings were eaten. In a commemorative sacrifice, such as the Sacrifice of the Mass, the destruction, while not real, is really symbolical.

God had two reasons for commanding destruction of the victim: First, the destruction prefigured, or pointed out ahead of time, the central and most important Sacrifice, that of Calvary, wherein Jesus Christ was to offer, to be destroyed, His human life for our salvation. The second reason for the destruction of the victim was that man might show thereby that he leaned entirely upon God and submitted himself completely to God's will.

Having noted these essential points of a sacrifice, we are now able to formulate a definition. A sacrifice is the offering to God of some sanctified object, made by a legitimate priest, who destroys or otherwise changes that object in acknowledgment of God's supreme dominion over man.

Sacrifice in a Figurative Sense

We are all familiar with the meaning of the word "sacrifice" as it is used in everyday speech — to give something up for a higher purpose. A son makes a sacrifice when he gives up marriage for the sake of his sick mother. In order to live up to Christian ideals, many men sacrifice position and money. Lent is a prescribed period of sacrifice for love of God. However, as we shall see, sacrifice in this more general sense is not the true and real sacrifice represented by Holy Mass.

Many acts of religious virtue and moral goodness resemble true and real sacrifice in some ways, just as a good woman may be called "a lily of virtue" because the whiteness of the flower suggests purity. This is only figurative language, however, which is used in literature in order to give striking impressions through specific sensory comparison.

Even Holy Scripture, it is true, makes powerful use of this figurative language. The Apostle Paul, for example, called the alms sent to him by the Christian people of Philippi "a sweet odor, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God." Two qualities of real sacrifice are present: (1) real sacrifice glorifies God, and almsgiving glorifies God because He, in the person of the poor, is the receiver of alms; and (2) for the giver, the alms are destroyed. Saint Paul constantly refers to the body as "a sacrifice, living, holy, pleasing to God," because it resembles genuine sacrifice in that the base, sensual desires of the body are destroyed for the glory of God, so that the life of heaven, the life of the spirit, may grow strong in man.

The word "sacrifice" is used in its broad, figurative sense in speaking of Jesus and His lowly, austere and even painful life of poverty and labor. But His death on Calvary is sacrifice in the proper sense. The martyrs died to testify to the truth of the Church, but their martyrdoms were not sacrifices in this strict sense, since some of the elements were missing.

There is an importance in learning to distinguish between the general and broad use of the term "sacrifice" and the strict and true meaning of the word as applied to the Mass. Many deny the value of the Sacrifice of the Mass and support their denial by stating that Scripture proves that any good deed which is performed for the glory of God is a sacrifice: the Psalmist refers to "the sacrifice of justice"; the Apostle Paul refers to alms as "a sweet odor, an acceptable sacrifice . . ."; spiritual virtues and noble deeds are constantly referred to in Scripture as sacrifices. But we must emphasize that each of these virtues is given the name "sacrifice" only figuratively. Each is compared to true sacrifice, but justice is justice and charity remains charity. When a holy writer calls these virtues a sacrifice, he is simply borrowing the name because the intention is to honor God through the practice of the virtue. His real meaning is that the virtue is *like* sacrifice.

Reasons for Sacrifice

From the fact that practically every religion known has had a system of sacrifice may be deduced the important point that sacrifice is an essential feature of man's relation to his Creator. Why does man offer sacrifice?

Man's heart is naturally religious and is desirous of expressing to God the respect He deserves. By an act of sacrifice, a human being gives expression in a tangible way to this sentiment of adoration and devotion toward the Supreme Head of all things.

A second motive for sacrifice is to thank God for the benefits He has given us. It would be impossible properly to repay the Creator and Conserver on Whom all beings depend, since everything in the world is His. But the act of returning to Him a part of those things that He has given a man is satisfactory evidence of that man's spirit of gratitude.

This innate desire to express reverence to the Creator by means of sacrifice is heightened when man realizes that he has offended God. He sees in making offerings to the Supreme Power a hope of appeasing His just wrath, and this motive must be considered the third reason for sacrifice. The prevalence of this notion (often in dim and distorted forms) among all peoples indicates, of course, that they retain some knowledge of man's fall from grace by the sin of our first parent. Reparation and satisfaction to God for man's sin was the principal motive of our Lord's sacrifice on the cross.

The final reason for sacrifice is the expectation that by a manifestation of devotion toward God, He may be disposed to grant the more readily those things of which a man stands in need. Though God is the all-provident Father of the universe and disposed to care for all His creatures, it shows respect and humility on the part of His subjects to ask Him for what they require.

These four motives are to be found, more or less completely, in all sacrifice. They may be summarized by the four words: (1) honor, (2) thanksgiving, (3) satisfaction, (4) petition. We shall see how they are realized in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why is it important to know in what sacrifice consists? What is part of the ritual of nearly all developed religions? What religions do not accept some form of sacrifice?
2. *Pagan sacrifice:*
   (a) How did the Vedics of India regard sacrifice? the gods? the highpriests? How does Hinduism differ from Vedism? Who was Mazda? What was Mazda's kingdom? What was Mazda's influence?
   (b) What was the principal object of Greek worship? What were the sacrificial offerings of the Greeks? What was the chief purpose of Roman worship?
   (c) What did Confucius give to the Chinese? Who is the head of Confucianism? What is Buddhism?
   (d) Why did Egyptians build temples? Who were allowed in Egyptian temples? How were temple services regulated? How did Egyptian religion develop? degenerate?
   (e) Who are the Semites? Who were priests in Babylonia?

What were the sacrificial offerings? What is the Semitic idea of sacrifice? What was the object of hill worship? Why did the Romans wish to eliminate Phoenician worship?

3. *Old Law.* Why was the Jewish sacrifice the most perfect of the Old Law? What were the two kinds of sacrifice? What are holocausts? peace offerings? sin offerings? trespass offerings? What do the sacrifices of the Old Law foreshadow? What two things stand out in the Old Law sacrifices? Why was Abel's sacrifice acceptable? Noe's? Why was the Jewish Pasch of importance? What did the sacrifice of the Pasch foretell? What does Saint Paul say of the "old sacrifices"?

4. *Six Marks.* What is the *first* mark of true sacrifice? What were the visible signs of Old Testament sacrifices? How do we serve God in offering a visible sacrifice? What words of Daniel indicate the need of internal devotion?

   What is the *second* mark of true sacrifice? What do we acknowledge when we sacrifice? Why is sacrifice to any creature sinful? What does Moses say of sacrifice to gods?

   What is the *third* mark of true sacrifice? What characterizes a true sacrifice? When does the offering of a sacrifice become "filled with merit"?

   What is the *fourth* mark of true sacrifice? What is the "essential idea" of priesthood? Who held priestly positions among the Jews? In what do Jewish, Christian and pagan rites agree regarding the priesthood?

   What is the *fifth* mark of true sacrifice? How is the victim of sacrifice prepared for offering? How is the offering changed by preparation ceremonies?

   What is the *sixth* mark of true sacrifice? What does every act of adoration express? Why must the offering of sacrifice be destroyed (give two reasons)?

   What is a sacrifice? What is the familiar meaning of sacrifice? How does Saint Paul speak figuratively of sacrifice? Why is martyrdom not a sacrifice, strictly speaking? Why must we distinguish the general term and the true meaning of sacrifice? How do persons who deny the value of the Mass support their denials?

   What are four *reasons for sacrifice?* Discuss each.

Religious Practices:

1. Cultivate *interior devotion* at Holy Mass.
2. Assist at Mass by using a Missal intelligently.

Unit One

Lesson II

THE EUCHARIST IS A TRUE SACRIFICE

WE HAVE seen that sacrifice is based on an instinct which is always present in human nature. This natural human instinct was elevated and regulated in the worship of the Jewish people. However, their sacrifices, though exalted, were not perfect and so could not please God fully. But they were valuable as a means of uniting mankind to God and as symbols looking forward to the perfect sacrifice to come. This lesson will discuss the Blessed Eucharist as the true and real sacrifice which is perpetually offered as an act of honor and adoration of God, to which all other sacrifices, those of the pagans and those of the Jews alike (though in very different measure), looked forward.

The Eucharist Is Both Sacrament and Sacrifice

Before we proceed, we must realize that the Eucharist is both a sacrament and a sacrifice. As sacrament the Eucharist under the visible forms of bread and wine contains the Body and Blood of Christ, and when we receive it we receive those invisible graces that make our souls share the life of God. Considered as a sacrifice, however, the Eucharist is an offering made to God of something that is eminently valuable, as a sign of God's supremacy over us and the world.

The Eucharist Is a True and Real Sacrifice

When Christ died on the cross, the physical part of our redemption was finished. By that death, all the prophecies of the

Old Testament were fulfilled. The sacrifices of the Old Law were no longer of any use, for their purpose had been accomplished in the actual, supreme sacrifice of which they were the figure and promise. But the Sacrifice of the Cross was a passing event. It happened only once, and in only one place. Was Christ now to leave the Church He founded without a sacrifice? Our lesson will give proofs from the word of God that Christ left a perpetual sacrifice to His Church.

But first we shall consider preliminary evidence to show that the Christian religion should fittingly have a permanent sacrifice. As we have seen, the offering of sacrifice in worship of God is a dictate of human nature and the natural law. Surely the Church of Christ, which is to last for all time and is to include all men, should not be without a sanctioned means of serving this need of human nature. Again, we have seen that the Old Testament made sacrifice the very center of its divine worship. It follows that the New Law, which fulfils and completes the Old, must have sacrifice as its center, too. Thirdly, any religion to be perfect must have an adequate way of worshiping God. The Christian religion, then, if it is divine, must have an enduring sacrifice. If for one moment the Church lacked this sacrifice, it would lack perfect divine worship and our religion would be incomplete. A fourth, and very powerful, reason is that Christianity is founded on the Sacrifice of the Cross. It was from this source that it received its life and its meaning. It must, therefore, show its true nature by a perpetuation of this supreme sacrifice — and this it does, as we shall see, in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Proof from Prophecy That the Eucharist Is a True Sacrifice

(a) Melchisedech

In the offering of Melchisedech we find the first figure of the Mass as an unbloody sacrifice. As Abraham was returning from a victorious war, Melchisedech, the highpriest and King of Salem, came out to meet him and offered bread and wine in thanksgiving to God for the victory. Christ, in the Psalms, is called "a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." These words indicate that by the nature of his sacrifice and the manner of his offering, Melchisedech prefigured the eternal priesthood of Christ. The priesthood of Christ must, therefore, be like the priesthood of Melchisedech, and His sacrifice must be according to that order, i. e., under the appearances of bread and wine. We know that our Lord offered such a sacrifice at the Last Supper and, as we shall see, that sacrifice is going on forever by means of the Mass. Here in the Sacrifice of the Mass our Divine Lord is the Eternal Priest; every day He offers sacrifice through the hands of His ordained priests.

(b) Prophecy of Malachias

Malachias, the last of the Prophets, gives magnificent testimony to the eternal priesthood and sacrifice of Jesus in these words:

"I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation" (Malachias 1:10, 11).

Note in verse 10 how clearly and definitely the sacrifice of the Old Law is rejected: though prescribed by God, it was for a time only. In verse 11, however, a new, unbloody and indescribably pure oblation is promised which will be offered in all places. For centuries sacrifice to God had been confined to the Jews. Now God states through His Prophet that in the future it will include all the nations of the earth.

Careful thought will show you that only in the Sacrifice of the Altar, the Catholic Mass, has the prophecy of Malachias been fulfilled.

Through the veil of the centuries the Prophets sang jubilantly and brightly of the promised gifts of the Lord which we now have. Their words are full of comfort for us. They assure us of the divine character of the daily Sacrifice of the Mass and of its acceptability in the sight of God.

Proof of the Eucharistic Sacrifice from the New Testament

(a) Words of Christ

Our strongest proof that the Eucharist is a sacrifice is found in the words which our Lord used in instituting the Blessed Sacrament. When He consecrated the bread, He said: "This is My Body, which is being given for you" (Luke 22:19). By use of the present tense, "This *is* My Body," He clearly indicated that the Sacred Body which He was holding in His hands was at that time being "given" or sacrificed for those to whom He directed His words. Likewise, when consecrating the chalice, He said: "This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood, which shall be shed for you" (Luke 22:20). He thus told them that the Precious Blood in the chalice before them was the Blood of the Sacrificial Victim — the Blood that would be spilled on the morrow for the remission of sins. The Body and Blood of Christ were offered and sacrificed Eucharistically on Holy Thursday just as truly as on the next day they would be physically. In time, then, the unbloody Eucharistic Sacrifice was made before the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross. His mystical and sacramental death at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday was the anticipation and foretelling of the physical death on the cross the following day. But it was truly a sacrificial ceremony in itself, because Christ associated it with His actual death in the future, which He asserted was taking place then in a mystical way.

Notice also that Christ said that His Body and His Blood were given, not "to" but rather "for" you. Those words indicate that we must regard the Eucharist as a sacrificial offering to God for the remission of our sins.

By Christ's words at the institution of the Holy Eucharist, "Do this in remembrance of Me," He ordained His Apostles priests and enjoined on them and their successors that the sacrifice now celebrated for the first time should be repeated until the end of time. That command is obeyed in the unending Sacrifice of the Mass.

(b) "My Blood of the New Covenant"

One expression which our Divine Saviour used in instituting the Eucharist indicates still more pointedly its sacrificial nature. In the Gospel according to Saint Matthew (26:28) we find that He called His Blood, as contained in the chalice, "My Blood of the New Covenant." Moses said after the establishment of the covenant of the Old Law: "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you" (Exodus 24:8). He spoke these words when he sprinkled the people with blood. This sprinkling with the "blood of the covenant" of the Old Law was common in the Jewish rite. It was the blood of the sacrifices, consecrated by the offering of holocausts.

Our Lord, in calling His Blood the "Blood of the New Covenant," connected it with that sacrificial blood of the Old. It, therefore, had the same character as the other — a blood of sacrifice, sealing a new relationship between God and man. The celebration of the Eucharist at the Last Supper was a true and real sacrifice, sealed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, and therefore the Mass, its continuation, is also a true and real sacrifice.

(c) Words of Saint Paul

In the Epistles of Saint Paul we find evidence for the Catholic doctrine that the Eucharist is a sacrifice:

"The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the Blood of Christ? And the bread that we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord? . . . Are not they who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? . . . But I say that what the Gentiles sacrifice, 'they sacrifice to devils and not to

God.' . . . You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:16, 18, 20, 21).

In this passage Saint Paul is contrasting the Christian Eucharist, or Mass, and the sacrifices of the pagans. We have here all the phrasing of sacrificial practices applied to the Mass. This comparison would be meaningless if the Eucharist were not a real and true sacrifice.

In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Saint Paul again refers to the essentials of sacrifice: "We have an altar, from which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle" (Hebrews 13:10). By his reference to an altar in the religion of Christ, he clearly boasts that our religion is a complete one — for it has the necessary element of a sacrifice. He says that the adherents of the Old Covenant (they who serve the tabernacle) have no right to participate in this sacrifice — a clear proof that our sacrifice is different from those of the ancient law.

Evidence from Tradition That the Eucharist Is a True and Real Sacrifice

Another source of faith is divine tradition, and from a hasty glance at some early records, we learn that the Church has always taught that Mass is the only and the perpetual Sacrifice of the New Law. Because the Mass is a deep mystery of faith, a peculiar secrecy protected it from the irreverent misunderstanding of unbelievers. In spite of studied reticence, however, many beautiful references are made to the Mass as a sacrifice in writings and in the various liturgies of the early Christian era.

(a) The Fathers

Often the Fathers in referring to the celebration of Mass use such expressions as "sacrifice," "host," "oblation," "victim," "offering," "priest," "altar"; thus proclaiming, explicitly or implicitly, that the essentials of a true and real sacrifice are present in the Mass. They refer to the Eucharist as "a sacrifice of atonement," "a complete and true sacrifice," "the most sublime and most true sacrifice." These writers also distinguish the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, as celebrated by a properly ordained priest, from interior, spiritual sacrifice, which we all should offer. They also distinguish the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ which is made by the words of consecration, from the participation of the faithful in Holy Communion which takes place in the completed sacrifice. Their writings also affirm what we have already considered about the priesthood of Melchisedech and the prophecy of Malachias.

Saint Cyprian, martyr (died 258), definitely states: "Because he offered bread and wine and blessed Abraham, Melchisedech was a priest of the Most High God. But who is a greater priest than our Lord Jesus Christ, Who offered not only the bread and wine of Melchisedech but His own Body and Blood?" (*Lib. 2, epist. 3*).

Saint Hippolytus (early third century) wrote a treatise in which he has Christ speak these words at the Last Judgment: "Come forth, ye bishops and priests, ye who have daily offered My Body and My Precious Blood" (*Lib. de Antichristo*).

Saint Chrysostom (died 407) writes: "Christ, instead of the killing of oxen and goats, commanded the sacrifice of Himself" (*Hom. 24*).

(b) Evidence from the Catacombs

In yet another language we may read the testimony of the early Church to the truth and reality of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and that is the sculptured language of the catacombs. The catacombs were burial places for the Christian dead, and in times of persecution were refuges for the priests where they held divine services. On the walls of these underground chapels the Christians drew simple and revealing pictures as symbols of their tremendous faith.

The Greek chapel of the Catacomb of Saint Priscilla, for instance, has a fresco over the altar which represents the liturgical breaking of the consecrated bread. A chalice is nearby. Beside this altarpiece is pictured the sacrifice of Abraham, which prefigured the Eucharistic Sacrifice. In the Catacomb of Saint Callistus are drawings that definitely show the priest offering sacrifice at a table, or altar, upon which are baskets of bread and fish. The bread, of course, refers to the Consecrated Body of our Lord. The fish was the accepted symbol under which the Christians expressed their belief in the Divinity of Christ and our redemption by His sacrificial death. These two symbols together pictorially proclaim that the Mass, like our Lord's death on the cross, is a sacrifice of atonement.

Discussion Aids:

1. On what is sacrifice based? What was the value of Jewish sacrifice? Why is the Blessed Eucharist the perfect sacrifice? How is the Eucharist a sacrament? a sacrifice?
2. How is *the Eucharist a real sacrifice?* How were the prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled? How was the Sacrifice of the Cross a passing event? Why should the Christian religion have a permanent sacrifice? On what is Christianity founded?
3. *Prophecy:*

   (a) What is found in the offering of Melchisedech? Tell the story of Melchisedech's offering. Why must the priesthood of Christ be like that of Melchisedech? How is Christ the Eternal Priest?

   (b) How does Malachias testify to the eternal priesthood? What does Malachias say of the old sacrifice? of the new Sacrifice? What people does he mention? what place? How is Malachias' prophecy fulfilled?
4. *New Testament:*

   (a) What were Christ's words in instituting the Blessed Sacrament? What did Christ clearly indicate by His words? What did the Last Supper anticipate? With what did Christ associate the Last Supper? When did Christ ordain His Apostles? How?

(b) What did Christ's expression "Blood of the New Covenant" indicate? Moses' expression in establishing "the Covenant"? When did Moses speak these words? Why? How did Christ connect the old and new sacrifices?

(c) What does Saint Paul say of the cup? the bread? them who eat of the sacrifice? How does Saint Paul contrast Christian and pagan sacrifices? What is the meaning of Saint Paul's reference to the Christian altar? to those "who serve the tabernacle"?

5. What has the Church always taught regarding the Mass?

(a) In what words do the Fathers of the Church refer to the Mass? How do the Fathers distinguish the Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ from interior sacrifice? from Holy Communion? What does Saint Cyprian say of the sacrifice of Melchisedech? of that of Jesus Christ? How does Saint Hippolytus testify to the Sacrifice of the Mass? Saint Chrysostom? In which centuries did these three saints live?

(b) How do the catacombs testify to the Eucharistic Sacrifice? Describe the Greek chapel of the Catacomb of Saint Priscilla; a drawing in the Catacomb of Saint Callistus. What is the significance of the symbols table, bread, fish?

Religious Practices:

1. Listen attentively to and follow from your Missal the Epistle and Gospel of the Mass each Sunday.
2. Encourage some indifferent Catholic to join a religious discussion club.

LESSON III

THE SACRIFICE OF CALVARY AND THE SACRIFICE OF THE ALTAR

ON THE evening before His death Christ offered the Sacrifice of the Eucharist in anticipation of His great sacrifice to come. On the following day He offered the Sacrifice of the Cross which redeemed us from our sins. These two offerings were limited in place and time, whereas our Lord wanted all men of all time to take part in His sacrifice and thus to share in its fruits. For this reason He made the benefits of the Sacrifice of Calvary perpetually available to man by instituting the Sacrifice of the Mass as an unending repetition of His death. Our object in Lesson III shall be to learn that we are at the foot of the cross with Mary and John and the other holy people whenever we participate in the Sacrifice of the Altar.

Because Christ our Lord is the central figure in these two sacrifices, it will be well for us before we get into our main theme in this lesson to examine the position He occupies in the sacrifices of the New Covenant. He is, in a word, both the Victim and the Priest of these sacrifices.

Jesus Is the Victim

As we have seen, the Old Law enjoined that food and animals be sacrificed to God. Yet these offerings could not pay completely and perfectly the debt of worship; their chief value lay in their figurative character and in the fact that they reminded the Jews of their burden of unatoned sin and kept alive in their hearts the desire for the coming of the promised Saviour Who would offer the perfect sacrifice, and so completely satisfy God's justice. By this faith in what was to come, they could share in the fruits of the real and true sacrifice.

This sacrifice was at last offered by the Head of the human race, our Representative before God, Jesus Christ. He took upon Himself the burden demanded of us by the Infinite God. He suffered the atoning punishment which we could not bear.

It was for this that He was born true man, that He assumed our human nature. He was our Brother in very truth. Adam was appointed by God to be the moral head of the human family. Because of this the whole human family inherited the sin of Adam. Christ was born the supernatural, spiritual Head of the human race. Because of this we inherit the merits and satisfaction of the sacrifice of Christ. He repaired the damage done by the natural head of mankind. He is therefore called the Second Adam. The first Adam left us the burden of sin. The Second Adam left us the paid-up debt plus an unending flow of graces and merits for our eternal redemption. Saint Paul puts it thus: "Therefore as from the offense of the one man [Adam], the result was unto condemnation to all men, so from the justice of the one [our Saviour], the result is unto justification of life to all men" (Romans 5:18).

(a) Isaias Foretells the "Man of Sorrows"

The Prophet Isaias viewed from afar the sacrifice of Christ. He pictured our Saviour in chapter 53 of his prophecy as "despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity: and His look was as it were hidden and despised, whereupon we esteemed Him not" (3); "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows . . ." (4); "But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed" (5); "All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (6); "He was offered because it was His own will . . ." (7).

From this prophetic announcement we see Christ as the "Man of Sorrows," sacrificing Himself for our sins in order to satisfy for us. All this He took upon Himself that we might be healed. Jesus was the Victim for the sins of the race.

(b) The New Testament Tells of Christ as Our Sacrificial Representative

The New Testament is filled with references to Christ's office as Head and Representative of the human race: ". . . Who Himself bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, having died to sin, might live to justice; by His stripes you were healed" (1 Peter 2:24); "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, becoming a curse for us . . ." (Galatians 3:13); "Christ died for all, in order that they who are alive may live no longer for themselves, but for Him Who died for them . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:15).

Jesus Christ: Highpriest of All Men for All Time

At the Last Supper Christ offered His Body and Blood according to the order of Melchisedech, under the appearances of bread and wine. The next day on Calvary He offered Himself physically in His own Person. The Sacrifice of the Altar instituted at the Last Supper and the Sacrifice of the Cross have this in common, that the Priest at both is the same Person, the Son of God.

(a) Epistle to the Hebrews

Only a priest can offer a true sacrifice, as we have already seen in the first lesson. It must then be true that Christ is a Priest. In the Epistle to the Hebrews Saint Paul explains Christ's priesthood when he shows the place that the Christian religion occupies in the relations between God and man. The Christian religion rightfully took the place of the ancient Jewish worship. This Christian religion is to last till the end of time, and he proves this because its Highpriest is Jesus Christ Himself — the eternal God.

In chapters 1-5 Saint Paul compares Christ to the mediators of the Old Law, pointing out that none who stood between God and man in this office of mediator ever possessed the complete character of priest, as did our Lord. God used the Prophets, he points out, for establishing the Old Covenant; but now, in the New Law, God speaks by His Son Who is incomparably greater than the angels or any mere creature. "For to which of the angels has He ever said: 'Thou art My Son, I this day have begotten Thee?' " (Hebrews 1:5); but these words God has said to our Priest or Mediator, His Divine Son, Who was begotten in eternity. Because our Priest or Mediator is so far superior to the priests of the Old Law, Saint Paul says, the obligations of our Law are the more binding. "Having therefore a great Highpriest Who has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession" (Hebrews 4:14).

(b) The Source of Christ's Priesthood

Jesus Christ is the Great Highpriest of the human race. He is truly God, One of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, but He is also by His Incarnation truly man, and He can, for that reason, at the same time appear before God as a true member of that human race that is appealing to God. His human actions have a special value before God, precisely because He is the natural Son of God.

Saint Paul tells us: "For every highpriest taken from among men is appointed for men in the things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebrews 5:1). These requirements for a true priest were realized in a way in the priests of the Old Testament, but never so completely as in Christ.

1. The priest must be "taken from among men." If he were not a member of the race or tribe he was to represent, his mediation would have no meaning. But, Saint Paul points out repeatedly, our Priest, Christ, was truly one of us, suffering as we do, "one tried as we are in all things except sin" (Hebrews 4:15). As a result Christ knows our wants and He knows how to present them accurately and faithfully before God.

2. The priest must be officially appointed and accepted by God as a mediator — otherwise God is not obliged to receive the petitions he offers. "And no man takes the honor to himself; he takes it who is called by God, as Aaron was" (Hebrews 5:4). But Christ was so called, as Saint Paul says, for God the Father said to Him: "Thou art a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Hebrews 5:6, quoting Psalm 109:4).

3. The priest's purpose is to deal in this world with those things that pertain to God. He is in this world, but his interests are those of God: he is consecrated to the service of God. So devoted to that divine mission was our Lord that His name is the Anointed One, the Christ. His whole life and His blessed death especially, show that He was, as no man ever has been, in this world for one purpose: to further the eternal designs of God.

4. The priest discharges his office by offering up gifts and sacrifices for sins. And Christ our Lord repeatedly said that His mission and His purpose in this world was the sacrifice of His life. He came into the world only that He might redeem the whole human race from the bondage of sin under which it had been placed.

Jesus is the one Highpriest of the whole human race for all time. The priests who came before Him prefigured by their imperfect offerings the perfect sacrifice to come. The priests of the New Testament go to the altar in the name and the authority of Christ. He is the True Priest, and it is He Who continually offers the sacrifice to God by and through them.

The Sacrifice of the Mass Is the Same Sacrifice as That of the Cross

Having studied Christ's qualifications for His part in the sacrifices of the New Testament, let us now study the statement that the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass are the same thing.

Three things which these two sacrifices have in common make them identical:

1. Both have the same Priest: Christ.

We shall observe that it was our Lord Himself, and not the executioners, Who offered His life on the cross. Christ's will could have stopped all the powers of the world from doing Him physical harm, had He been so minded. But "He was offered," according to the words of Isaias, "because it was His own will."

In the Sacrifice of the Mass it is likewise our Lord Who is the Priest. The human priest whom we see at the altar is acting only in the name of our Lord. All this, of course, is because our Saviour is the chief Highpriest of the New Covenant, Who has made once for all the necessary sacrifice of reparation. He still lives, however, to make intercession for us at the throne of God, because He is a Priest forever; wherefore the priests of this earth are merely His agents. This is strikingly brought out at the Consecration of the Mass when the priest speaks in Christ's name, not saying "This is the Body of Christ," but "This is My Body." As we study the various important parts of the Mass in a more detailed way, we shall see this brought out more clearly.

2. Both have the same Victim: Christ.

Christ was Priest, but He was also Victim on the cross, as our study has shown us. The same thing is true in the Mass. It is Christ Who offers Himself in atonement for the sins of mankind. How our Lord, now in eternal glory, becomes a Victim for us again is a mystery. But His extreme humility in abasing Himself to the appearances of bread and wine is essentially a continuation of the sacrificial intention He displayed on Calvary: which intention was the essence of the Sacrifice of the Cross.

3. Both are offered by means of the same Body and Blood.

The two sacrifices take place by means of the same Body and Blood. An important difference, however, is that on the cross the Body and Blood were visible, while on the altar they are hidden under the likeness of bread and wine. But our faith teaches us that the Body and Blood of our Lord are as real in the Eucharist as they were when He walked the lanes of Palestine, as they were when He stood before Pilate, as they were when the soldier plunged the lance into His sacred side.

The same Priest, the same Victim and the same means of offering — these three points link up the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Mass, and make them essentially the same sacrifice.

How the Sacrifice of the Cross and the Sacrifice of the Altar Differ

Though these two sacrifices are the same, there are some minor differences which we shall note:

1. The Sacrifice of the Cross was offered once and once only. It cannot be repeated. Christ's Passion and Death, once and for all, met all the requirements of God's justice for all time. The Sacrifice of the Altar, however, is perpetual. It is celebrated every day in obedience to Christ's command: "Do this in remembrance of Me."

2. On the cross the death of Christ was real and physical. On the altar the mystic separation of His Blood from His Body, both really present under the appearances of bread and wine, is symbolical of His death.

3. On the cross the sacrifice was bloody. On the altar the sacrifice is unbloody.

4. The Sacrifice of the Cross is an inexhaustible source or supply of merit. By this sacrifice our sins and the sins of all the men, women and children who ever lived, who live on the earth now, or who are yet to come, find a complete and perfect source of remission and satisfaction. The Sacrifice of the Altar might be called the means by which we apply these merits to our needs. The Mass gets its power and efficacy from the Cross.

5. The Sacrifice of the Cross was applied for the whole world. The Mass, while having general fruits for the whole world, applies part of the merits of sacrifice according to the particular needs of the individual or group for whom the particular Mass is offered.

The Death on the Cross: A True and Real Sacrifice

Having seen that the Sacrifice of Calvary and the Sacrifice of the Mass are the same, let us see why these Sacrifices of the New Law have a right to be called perfect sacrifices. That will give us an appreciation of the value of the Mass which we attend so often. Since they are the same, we need look only at the Sacrifice of the Cross and apply what we learn of its value to the Mass. Let us see why the Sacrifice of the Cross is the perfect sacrifice. We do that by applying to it the six essential marks of a sacrifice which we have already learned in Lesson I:

1. There was an external Victim on the cross: a Man Whose hands and side were pierced with nails and a lance; from Whose head, crowned with thorns, there streamed blood; Whose livid Body stood out in white relief against the darkened sky. All Jerusalem saw Him hanging there on that hill of Calvary outside the gate.

The Victim was animated by the most devout sentiments. We need only read our Lord's last words on the cross to appreciate how reverently and humbly He was making the sacrifice.

2. This Divine Victim was offered to appease the justice of God. This we know from all those references which we have already seen which stress the fact that our Divine Saviour was making atonement for the sins of men. "For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (John 3:17).

3. This fact also covers the third requirement — that the sacrifice was an acknowledgment that God is our Master, to Whom we are subject.

4. Christ is, as we have seen, the great Highpriest of all time. He it was Who properly made the Sacrifice of the Cross. We might be led to believe that the executioners were the real sacrificers. But though they did the physical acts that resulted in the sacrifice, the internal acts of acceptance and offering of the pains were performed by Christ — and this consent to His own suffering and death made our Lord the real Priest of that sacrifice. "He was offered because it was His own will" (Isaias 53:7).

5. Christ never had need of being purified before His sacrifice to God — because of His nature He was holiness itself. This adds to the supreme perfection of His sacrifice.

6. Lastly, the Victim was destroyed; His human life was taken away. The death, of course, could not and did not affect His Divine Nature. Nevertheless He was sacrificed in a true and real sense.

Thus we see that the death of our Lord on the cross answers all the requirements of a true sacrifice. Moreover, it answers them in a way far superior to that of any other sacrifice, not only on account of the heightened circumstances, but also on account of the Divine Nature of the One Who was at one and the same time both Priest and Victim. Though He suffered only as man, the fact that our Lord was at the same time God gave His sacrifice an infinite value which makes it the pivotal sacrifice of all time.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why did Christ perpetuate the Sacrifice of Calvary? How should we participate in the Sacrifice of the Altar? What is Christ's place in New Testament sacrifices?

2. *Jesus is Victim.* Why were food and animals imperfect sacrificial offerings? What was the chief value of sacrificial offerings in the Old Law? How could the Jews share in fruits of the true sacrifice? Why was Christ born? How is Adam the head of the human family? How is Christ the Head? How does Saint Paul contrast Adam and Christ?

   (a) How does Isaias picture the Saviour? How does Isaias present Christ as the Victim?

   (b) How does Saint Peter present Christ as Head of the human race? What does Saint Paul say of Christ to the Galatians? to the Corinthians?

3. How is *Christ Highpriest for all time?* What do the Sacrifices of the Altar, the Last Supper and the Cross have in common?

   (a) Give proof that Christ is a Priest. How does Saint Paul explain Christ's priesthood? How do we know that the Christian religion is to last for all time? How does Saint Paul compare Christ to mediators of the Old Law? What does Saint Paul say of Christ in the New Law, as Priest? as Highpriest?

   (b) What is the source of Christ's priesthood? How is Christ man's great Intercessor? What does Saint Paul say of "every highpriest"?

      1) Show that Christ was "taken from among men." How does Saint Paul tell the Hebrews that Christ was one of us?
      2) Show that Christ was our Mediator.
      3) How was Christ qualified to deal with those things that pertain to God?
      4) How did Christ offer sacrifice for sin? By what authority do priests today go to the altar?

4. How many things have the Sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Mass in common?

      1) How is Christ Priest in both? What does Isaias say of Christ's sacrifice? How is Christ Priest in the Mass today? How is Christ's eternal priesthood brought out at the Consecration of the Mass?

   2) How is Christ the Victim of the Mass today? How may this mystery be explained?
   3) How are the Sacrifice of the Mass and that of the Cross offered by means of the same Body and Blood? What is the important difference? What does our faith teach us regarding the Eucharist?
5. How do the Sacrifice of the Cross and that of the Altar differ: 1) in time? 2) in reality? 3) in appearance? 4) in power and efficacy? 5) in application?
6. What gives us an appreciation of the value of the Mass?
   1) What is the first essential mark of sacrifice? How was Christ the Victim of sacrifice?
   2) Why did Christ sacrifice Himself?
   3) How did the Sacrifice of the Cross cover the third requirement of sacrifice?
   4) How was Christ Highpriest at the Sacrifice of the Cross?
   5) What adds to the perfection of Christ's sacrifice?
   6) How was the Victim of the Cross destroyed?
7. Why is the Sacrifice of the Cross superior to any other sacrifice? Why is it the pivotal sacrifice of all time?

Religious Practices:

1. Unite your little sacrifices of each day to the Sacrifice of the Cross by meeting difficulties with courage and patience.
2. Forgive even your enemies. Christ set this example.

Lesson IV

PURPOSE AND BENEFITS OF THE MASS

AS WE have seen, the Mass is the unbloody sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a lasting remembrance of the suffering and death of our Lord, and a continual offering of His Body and Blood to God for the benefit of both the living and the dead. The Mass is the same sacrifice as the Sacrifice of the Cross because the Victim and the Priest are the same — our Blessed Lord, Jesus Christ — and the offering is made by means of the same Body and Blood. The ends, or purposes, for which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered are the same as those of the Sacrifice of the Cross. It is our intention in this lesson to study those purposes. They are: first, to honor and glorify God; second, to thank Him for all the benefits bestowed on the whole world; third, to satisfy God's justice for the sins of men; fourth, to obtain all graces and blessings.

Therefore we assist at Mass to honor God, to thank Him, to make satisfaction for our sins and to ask favors.

To Honor and Glorify God

God made all things for Himself. Therefore, all creatures have as their chief end the glorifying of their Creator. The Psalmist sings over and over again: "Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised, and of His greatness there is no end" (Psalm 144:3). But how can we give due honor and glory to God, Whose majesty is immeasurable and eternal? The saints in heaven adore Him throughout eternity. The angels, brighter than anything on earth, cover their faces with their wings before the glory of God and sing: "Holy, holy, holy!" The Blessed

Mother of God, Queen of heaven, never stops singing her pure and exalted Magnificat of praise. But all this is not praise enough to measure up to the praiseworthiness of God. Blessed Henry Suso prayed: "He that hopes worthily to praise Thee, acts as he who runs after the wind and would seize the shadow."

Yet the songs of angels and the chants of the Virgin Mother of God are as nothing compared to the honor and glory offered to God in one single Mass by a poor and ragged priest in some hidden corner of the globe. The praise of celestial beings is great, but the praise offered in the Mass is infinite, because the Victim and the Priest — the Son of God — is infinite. Through the Mass, then, and in no better way we are able to give to God the praise He merits.

Our private praise of God is imperfect and often worthless. It is therefore wise to unite it with the perfect praise which Christ Himself, our Mediator, offers to God on the altar during Mass. This union makes our poor worship full of merit and pleasing to Almighty God.

It is not only with our hearts and lips that we should honor God. The action of our lives must be a constant adoration of the Creator. God must be always before our eyes. We must never stray from the beneficent influence of His Divine Presence; we must never stop praising Him. If our every day is lived in praise of God, it will be filled with good and holy work, kindness to others, helpful and profitable conversation and noble thoughts. All these will continue the morning Mass in our hearts, influencing us to good, just as magnificent music is heard for hours in memory.

To Thank God for His Goodness

Among the first words a mother teaches her little ones are: "Thank you." Gratitude to those who help us is a great virtue. Sincere thanksgiving is a noble quality which makes us pleasing to both God and men. The grateful person is eager to respond to favors granted him. He acknowledges within his heart the goodness of his benefactor. He is anxious also to show his gratitude by word and deed. If possible, we present costly gifts in gratitude to our friends. They speak for themselves of our overflowing hearts.

The natural gifts of God alone inspire us to fervent thanks. The fields, the forests, the sun, moon and stars — all the rich wealth and beauty of our surroundings are enough to make us fall to our knees in humble gratitude. But what are these passing earthly gifts compared to the torrent of divine goodness which brought us God's own Son, and the spiritual treasures and graces which make our lives happy and good!

The greatest of all ways of thanking God is the Blessed Eucharist. This word comes from the Greek language, and means a rite of thanksgiving. In the Gloria of the Mass, the Church gives thanks to God: "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory." In the Preface of the Mass the Church reminds us of the duty of thanksgiving: "It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee."

God Himself has made possible what we cannot do ourselves. He has made it possible for us to thank Him for all things through Jesus Christ. Christ and His sacrifice have made us rich enough to repay even the God of heaven and earth for all the goodness we receive from His hand! Our private prayers, our penances and our individual devotions cannot accomplish this, because we cannot offer to God the gift of His Son in these things. It is only in the Sacrifice of the Mass that we can return the One Acceptable Gift.

To Make Atonement

The Law of Moses compelled the Jews to make burnt offerings in recognition of God's supreme power, but it is important to recall that it also required them to make peace offerings to avert the just judgments of God in punishment of their sins. We read that Samuel and David in times of pestilence and war made peace offerings to God that their difficulties might be removed. If God gave the stiff-necked Jews so effective a sacrifice of propitiation, surely He gave Christians a more powerful one.

Saint Thomas Aquinas declares in these words that the Mass is a powerful means of atonement: "The special effect of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is that it operates our reconciliation with God. Just as a man will forgive the wrong done him by his fellow-man in consideration of a valuable gift which is presented to him, or a service which is rendered to him, so the anger of God may be appeased by the acceptable service thou dost render Him when thou hearest Mass, and by the priceless gift which thou dost offer Him in the oblation of the Body and Blood of Christ."

The Mass helps to wipe away the guilt of sin. The Sacraments of Baptism and Penance forgive sin directly, if all conditions required are present. The Mass, however, appeases the anger of God and secures from Him the grace of repentance. Mass obtains actual graces for us which enlighten our minds to see the awfulness of sin, which soften our hearts with feelings of mercy and hope, and which turn our steps to the Sacrament of Penance in deep contrition and sorrow. The Mass also obtains pardon for venial sins which so often lead us to the brink of mortal sin. The Mass, then, does not directly cancel sins; it is not a sacrament. But it has the power to propitiate for sin by giving those graces needed to bring us to the sacraments.

In the celebration of Mass, especially in the Secret Prayer, the Church constantly begs the Lord for reconciliation. The Church wishes to impress upon her children that we poor, sin-laden men must first be reconciled to God, must be restored to His friendship, to participate in the blessings which He will then freely and generously impart.

The Mass also has the power to cancel temporal punishment, which is the satisfaction due after the guilt of sin has been remitted. We know that this temporal punishment must be paid either on this earth or in purgatory. That is the reason why we have Holy Masses said for the souls of our dead friends — that God may accept the satisfaction of the Mass to lessen their time in purgatory. To what extent Mass offered for a soul in the state of grace on earth or in purgatory cancels temporal punishment has not been determined. Saint Thomas Aquinas contends that the offering of the Mass is sufficient to satisfy for all punishment.

We have much evidence in favor of this purpose of the Mass. Jesus Christ Himself expressly stated at the Last Supper that His Body under the appearance of bread would be broken and His Blood in the chalice shed for "the forgiveness of sins." The early Fathers include many propitiatory prayers in their liturgies. Saint Monica at her death had no other request to make of her family than that "everywhere, wherever they might be, they would remember her at the altar." Her son, the holy Doctor, Saint Augustine, states that after her death, prayers and the Sacrifice of our Redemption were offered for her.

To Obtain All Graces and Blessings

The hour of the Sacrifice of the Mass is the time when God Almighty sits upon the throne of grace. It is then that we are advised to draw near His feet to ask for mercy and for help in all our needs. Saint Alphonsus Liguori says that the angels look forward to the time of Mass with radiant eagerness, for it is then they wish to intercede for us so that their intercession may be acceptable before God.

The Council of Trent teaches that the sacrifice is offered for all the spiritual and temporal graces which we need. Examine the various Votive Masses and the prayers for different purposes in the Roman Missal. You will discover that the Church pleads eloquently for all the needs of soul and body, not only for individuals but for nations.

If we enter into the spirit of the Mass we enter into the all-perfect spirit of Christ's Passion and Death, with the result that our lives will be flooded with graces. The Mass helps us to do good actions, to overcome temptation, to hate the world with its deceit and its dangers, to resist the attacks of Satan, to endure difficulties with patience, even with joy and gratitude. In short, we have in the Mass all the help we need to fight the good fight to the final triumphant end of our earthly pilgrimage.

These are spiritual blessings. Temporal benefits also flow from the riches of Holy Mass. By means of our part in this perfect offering we prove to God that we are worthy of those natural gifts which we request of Him. The gift of health, the benefit of employment, the favor of peace — these and many other temporal needs are blessings which we may worthily request in the Mass. But we know that we should submit our requests to God's will and abide submissively by what His supreme wisdom decides. In the Collect for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost we pray that we may ask "what is pleasing to God."

We are not alone when we cry from the depths of our poverty and our sadness at the Altar of Sacrifice. Christ Himself, our Mediator, is there with us. He prays with us and for us. He offers His own adorable Body and Blood for us — and we offer it to God the Father with Him.

The Fruits of Holy Mass

By Baptism you were made a child of God. We are all of the household of Christ and fellow-citizens of the saints. All who are spiritually living members of God's family, which is spread over the entire earth, can draw their full share of the blessings and graces that flow over the Church from the Masses offered perpetually in all lands. If you should wander to the jungles of Africa and there die, forgotten by everybody, your Mother the Church would not forget you. She would be offering for your salvation the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, and after your death, that Blood would continue to flow for your salvation.

(a) The Church Benefits by the Mass

The whole Church, both the living members and the dead, is benefited by the fruits of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The living gain all that furthers their salvation, all they hope for and all they ask of God, both temporally and spiritually, subject, as we have already said, to the condition of its being in accord with His will.

The departed gain the satisfaction which the Mass makes for their sins. Their debt is paid, and as a result they are released from purgatory and enter into heaven.

The saints in heaven may also be considered beneficiaries of the Mass, for the Holy Sacrifice is offered up in their honor. This is not to be understood in the sense that they who already possess the vision of God actually receive something more, but rather in the sense that we give thanks to God through the Mass for the heavenly glory He has bestowed on them.

(b) Individuals Benefit by the Mass

Mass is frequently said for the intentions of individuals. It may be celebrated many times for the same person and the same intention. This is often done for the Poor Souls. God has kept hidden in His Divine Heart the secret of just how much any one soul is benefited by the Mass. The Church admits that she cannot tell the extent of this satisfaction when she permits a perpetual Mass to be celebrated for the same soul. We do know this, however, that one Mass *could* pay in full the debt of all the souls in purgatory because its merit is infinite.

(c) Special Fruits of the Mass

Besides these general and individual fruits, there are some more special benefits of the Mass. First of those who benefit by the more special fruits of the Mass is the priest who celebrates it. The priest receives this grace according to his "disposition and coöperation." The essential value of the Mass is not lessened by the personal character of the priest, just as the power of a seed to grow and bear fruit is not lessened by the character of the sower. However, when a priest celebrates with holiness and fervor, he earns more graces for himself and for others than he would if he were lacking in these qualities.

Others who benefit in a special way are those who are prayed for during the Mass, whether they are present or not.

Another group which benefits from the special fruits of the Holy Sacrifice are the altar-boys and those who assist at Mass. The Church prays: "Be mindful, O Lord, of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee." By being present at, and participating in, the Holy Sacrifice, we give evidence of our faith and openly confess our confidence in the power of Almighty God to help us in all our necessities.

Those for Whom Mass Cannot Be Offered

Mass cannot be offered publicly for people who are not members of the Church; that is, their names may not be read from the pulpit to be prayed for. However, Catholics may have Mass celebrated privately and without any announcement for their non-Catholic friends and relatives, living or dead. This is, in fact, an act of holy charity. As public heretics and schismatics and excommunicate persons are cut off from the body of the Church, it is only reasonable that they cannot share in the spiritual life of that body; Mass may not be celebrated for them, except for their conversion.

Discussion Aids:

1. What is the Mass? What are the ends for which it is offered? Why do we assist at Mass?
2. Why should we *glorify* God? What song of the Psalmist is quoted? What was Blessed Henry Suso's prayer? How is the greatest glory offered to God? Why should we unite in offering the Sacrifice of the Mass? Why must we adore God by the action of our lives? How may we continue the morning Mass in our hearts?
3. Why should we *thank* God? Why is gratitude a great virtue? How do we express our gratitude to men? For natural gifts? What is the greatest of all ways to thank God? What does "Eucharist" mean? In the Mass, how do we thank God in the Gloria? in the Preface? How has God made it possible for us to thank Him?
4. *Atonement.* Why did the Jews make burnt offerings? peace offerings? Why did Samuel and David make peace offerings?

What does Saint Thomas say of the Mass as a means of atonement? How does the Mass help to wipe away the guilt of sin? What does the Mass obtain for us? Why is the Mass not a sacrament? What is asked in the Secret Prayer of the Mass? What is temporal punishment? Why are Masses offered for the dead? What does Saint Thomas say of offering Mass for atonement? What did Christ say at the Last Supper about "the forgiveness of sins"? What was Saint Monica's request at death?

5. How may we *obtain all graces and blessings?* What does Saint Alphonsus Liguori say of the angels and the Mass? What does the Council of Trent teach regarding the graces of the Mass? Why should we enter into the spirit of the Mass? How does participation at Mass help us? How do temporal benefits flow from the Mass? Why should we submit our requests to God's will? How is Christ our Mediator at the Mass?

6. What are the *fruits of the Mass?* How do we share them?

   (a) What are the benefits of the fruits of the Mass for the living? the departed? the saints?

   (b) How may individuals benefit by the Mass?

   (c) What are the special fruits of the Mass? How does the priest benefit by the special fruits of the Mass? the faithful? the altar-boys? those who assist?

7. How may Mass be celebrated for non-Catholics? for heretics or excommunicate persons?

Religious Practices:

1. Continue the Mass in your heart by living worthily each day.
2. Assist often at Mass to receive the special fruits of the sacrifice.

UNIT TWO:

The Mass: History, Prayers, Liturgy

LESSON V

HISTORY OF THE MASS

THE Mass as we celebrate it today is, in all essentials, the Sacrifice of the Eucharist as instituted by our Lord at the Last Supper. In the Mass we find the words and actions used by Him in the Upper Room.

The foreshadowing of the Eucharist took place in the days of the Prophets. When the Jews were captive in Egypt the Paschal lamb had been given to them as a means of deliverance and also as food to nourish them during their wanderings in the desert. When they finally came to the promised land they celebrated this banquet each year in memory of the deliverance from Egypt, and also to preserve in their hearts the blessed hope of a greater gift, a gift which would be final because no other could offer more. They cherished this hope for centuries, and when Saint John the Baptist said, "Behold, the Lamb of God," he pointed out that our Lord was to take the place of the old sacrificial lamb.

The Last Supper

During His public life our Lord announced to the people that He would give them the Eucharist for their eternal life. Probably none of them saw in this an assurance that the future Eucharistic Sacrifice was to be in atonement for their sins, which were depriving them of eternal life. We know that they did not understand its promise that the Eucharistic Sacrament was to be their food; they regarded it as impossible, and "no longer went about with Him." The Apostles, however, through the mouth of Peter, protested that our Lord spoke "the words of everlasting life." Their faith was well rewarded. They alone were permitted to be with Him at that tremendous moment when He, the true sacrificial Lamb, was first sacrificed for the eternal life of mankind.

(a) Feast of the Passover

In Saint Luke's account we receive a clear picture of the eagerness with which Jesus waited for the last Pasch, which was the first Mass, the crown and end of the Old Law and the beginning of the New. "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer," He said.

When the Apostles entered that Upper Room and sat at the table for the Paschal feast on that first Holy Thursday, they probably had no idea of the great mystery which was to be accomplished in their midst. Several eye-witnesses have given us an account of this supreme event. Saint Matthew and Saint Mark give nearly the same report. (Saint John does not record the institution, but devotes his account to the promise made to the people.) Saint Paul, though not an eye-witness, has written of the institution. This is also true of Saint Luke.

The Jewish ceremonial of the Pasch was observed at the Last Supper. Some of these details were: the use of unleavened bread, the three or four ritual cups of wine, the words of benediction, the Great Hallel (Psalms 119-136), and other psalms of thanksgiving in praise of God and His goodness to His people, and the instruction which was a recitation of the benefits God had showered upon them. Not one of the Evangelists describes any detail of the Jewish Paschal feast. This may have been because they were all familiar with these ceremonies, or, more probably, because they were completely absorbed by the astonishing new happening which they witnessed at the supper.

(b) Institution of the Eucharist

Jesus took the bread which was on the table and gave thanks. Then breaking the bread, according to the Paschal ceremony, in token of sorrow and sacrifice, He gave it to His disciples with these words: "Take and eat. . . ." "This is My Body which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Next He took the cup of wine, which was probably the third of the ritual cups, the one containing a little water mixed with the wine. Again He gave thanks and again He spoke to the Apostles: "All of you drink of this; for this is My Blood of the New Covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins."

The Apostles ate of the bread and drank of the wine. By this they communicated in the perfect Sacrifice of Atonement, and at long last the centuries-old desire of men to be united with God was realized.

But our Blessed Lord also said: "Do this in remembrance of Me." What He had done with the bread and wine was to be repeated forever: a new sacrifice in memory of the cross was here instituted. In these words He gave His disciples the power to do what they had just seen Him doing. He gave them not only the power, but the command, to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Eucharist in like manner. These words and actions, carefully guarded by Holy Church, form the center around which have developed the various prayers and ceremonies of the Mass as we have it in our Missal today. The sacramental repetition and recollection of the death of Jesus Christ is to be handed down from generation to generation until the end of time.

The Primitive Mass

Our Lord's command to the Apostles to repeat His sacrifice was, according to a pious conjecture, first carried out by Saint Peter, the Prince of the Apostles and the head of the Church, after the descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost. The Apostles would probably not have been bold enough to carry out so sacred an action before they had been strengthened and made holy by the graces of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, the Old Law was not entirely abolished, or annulled, as far as the priesthood was concerned, until after the descent of the Holy Ghost; and the execution of the New Law would not have been begun until the Old was entirely abrogated. The Acts of the Apostles record that, before the descent of the Holy Ghost, "all these with one mind continued steadfastly in prayer," and after Pentecost "the breaking of the bread" is mentioned.

The primitive Mass was probably said in the Syriac tongue. Neither the Bible nor history tells us anything definite about the articles and the ceremonies used in the first Mass. Yet we can be sure that this sacred celebration was carried out with dignity and the proper ritual. The Apostles knew that the sacrifices of the Old Law were offered with unrivaled splendor. God Himself commanded the priests to wear certain garments and to follow a set ritual for sacrifices which were only goats and lambs. How much more beauty and nobility should surround the Sacrifice of the New Law, whose Victim was the Son of God!

From the very first we find all the chief parts of the Mass which we have today: a Eucharistic prayer (Eucharist means thanksgiving), the repetition of the words and actions of Christ in the consecration of the bread and wine; the fraction (breaking) of bread; and the distribution of Holy Communion. Early writers tell us that the prayers of the Mass in these early days were composed by the celebrant as he went on. But in the second and third centuries, certain procedures were put down in writing and thus different liturgies came into existence.

Days of Persecution

During the terrible persecutions which the Christians suffered for several centuries, they were forced to celebrate Mass in secret in their homes or in the catacombs. They gathered in the dark of night to offer the atoning sacrifice, and then carried the consecrated Hosts wrapped in linen to those in prison — Divine Food that gave their brothers strength to die amid torments with songs of praise on their lips. Even little children revealed this wonderful strength after partaking of the Body and

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Blood of Christ under the appearances of bread and wine. We all know the inspiring story of Saint Tarcisius, the little altar-boy who died protecting the Blessed Eucharist.

After the age of persecution the Christians were free to celebrate the Mass publicly. This they did with great beauty and ceremony. They felt that no time or effort was too much to give to praising God through the Mass. In the early days of the Church, the Mass was longer than it is now.

The Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages loyalty and devotion to the Holy Sacrifice were remarkable. Religion was inseparable from the everyday life of the people; Mass was celebrated in connection with all important events and occasions of life. People turned in at wayside chapels to hear Mass as naturally as they performed any usual action. Farmers, nobles, children, kings, stopped whatever they were doing and knelt when the church-bell rang at the Consecration. The Ages of Faith knew and venerated the Eucharistic Sacrifice as the most important element of life.

In the sixteenth century the Protestant reformers denied the sacrificial character of the Mass, claiming that our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross was the only sacrifice of the New Law. They misinterpreted His words, "Do this in remembrance of Me," as commanding no more than a mere memorial service. Catholic altars were destroyed, Catholic churches were stolen and converted into Protestant meeting-houses, no longer consecrated to sacrifice. Priests were forbidden to celebrate Mass under threat of death, and the faithful were forbidden to hear Mass.

We should note that nearly all these things have their counterpart in the world today. Many Catholic countries are suffering persecution of one kind or another, and many of the faithful still shed their blood for the most precious Gift of all, finding their strength in the living Christ of the Eucharist.

The Word "Mass"

Liturgical writers are not agreed as to the origin of the word "Mass." According to some it comes from the Hebrew, *Massah*, meaning a debt or obligation. Yet others conclude that it comes from the Greek word, *Myesis*, meaning initiation. A large body of authorities teach that it is an improved form of *mes* or *messe*, an obsolete expression used by the people of northern Europe to mean a feast, a happy gathering, or even a sacrifice.

Most of our writers on liturgy, however, believe that it comes from the Latin *Missa* or *Missio*, meaning a dismissal. In the first five or six centuries of the Church, when pagans and infidels attempted by terrible means to root out Christianity, the Church imposed the *Disciplina Arcani*, or Discipline of the Secret, forbidding that the principal mysteries of faith be revealed to pagans, infidels or the unbaptized. During this time, the catechumens (those who were not yet full-fledged members of the Church) and the public penitents (those Christians who were being punished for evil-doing) were dismissed from Mass at the Credo, before the chief solemnities of divine service began. There was another dismissal, that of the faithful, at the close of the ceremonies. From these dismissals we would get the Latin word *Missa*, and hence the English word "Mass."

We will mention a few of the early terms applied to the Sacrifice of the Mass in order to note the qualities of the Mass which these terms indicate. The most ancient name for the Mass is given in the Acts of the Apostles: "the Breaking of the Bread." Saint Dionysius calls the Mass *Mystagogia*, meaning a divine participation in, or initiation into, the sacred mysteries. It was also called *Synaxis* or "Assembly," because in the Mass we are gathered together in union with our Divine Saviour. *Anaphora* was often used as a name for the Mass, signifying that the priest sends up our offering to God. *Eulogia*, signifying a blessing, refers to the Consecration, the principal part of the Mass. *Mysterion* was applied to the Mass from the sacred mysteries it contains. *Deipnon*, meaning "Banquet," refers to the fact that the Mass gives us the living Bread for the eternal nourishment of our souls. *Agathon*, or "Good," expresses the idea that the Mass is the only enduring good upon which man can surely depend; all other seeming good is transient, fleeting and often productive of evil. *Prosphora* indicates that the Mass is an oblation offered to God. *Dominicum* signifies not only that the Mass was instituted by the Lord but also that He is offered in it. However, the name most often used, and one that is found at the present time throughout the East, is *Liturgia*, "A Public Ministry." This relates to the fact that the Mass is a public celebration, and the center of all Catholic worship.

Most of these names are Greek and are recorded in the writings of the Greek Fathers. All are now out of use with the exception of the last. It is not important that we remember these names. It is important, however, to observe that the true character of the Mass was recognized most clearly from the earliest days, as these names attest.

Discussion Aids:

1. In all essentials, what is the Mass as we celebrate it today? How was the Mass prefigured? What is the story of the Paschal lamb? How did John the Baptist point out that Christ was to replace the sacrificial lamb?
2. How was the Eucharist promised by Christ? How do we know that the people of Christ's time did not understand His promise? How did Peter protest the unbelief of the people? How was the faith of the Apostles rewarded?

   (a) What does Saint Luke tell us of Christ's desire for the Pasch? What other accounts of the Last Supper are given in the New Testament? What details of the Last Supper are given about bread? wine? benediction? psalms? the Jewish Pasch?

   (b) How did Jesus institute the Eucharist? Why did He break the bread? What did He do when He took the wine? How were the Apostles united with God? How did Christ ordain them? Why is the Holy Sacrifice perpetuated?

3. How was the *primitive Mass* celebrated? What happened through the descent of the Holy Ghost? How do we know that the primitive Mass was celebrated with proper ritual? What were the chief parts of the Mass in the first Christian century? in the second and third centuries?
4. During the *days of persecution,* how was the Mass celebrated? the Eucharist distributed? the faith of Christians tested? How was Mass celebrated after the age of persecution?
5. During the *Middle Ages,* what was the religious life of the people? in the sixteenth century? in the twentieth century?
6. To what do some writers attribute the origin of the word *"Mass"?* most writers on liturgy? What was the "Discipline of the Secret"? What is the most ancient name for the Mass? What did Saint Dionysius call the Mass? Why was the Mass also called "Assembly"? "Anaphora"? "Eulogia"? What other names were applied to the sacrifice? What name is found at present in the East? What is far more important than remembering these names?

Religious Practices:

1. Imitate the early Christians in their participation in the Holy Sacrifice.
2. Explain to others the true character of the Mass.

alone. Man, having, besides a spirit, a body, must acknowledge his gratitude to God for this gift by using it in God's worship. For that reason he engages in special acts which will express exteriorly that veneration of God which his mind feels.

What Is Liturgy?

In order to assure the dignified and fitting celebration of this external worship of God, the Church has formulated many rules of direction. These regulations govern the actions and movements of the celebrant and the laity, and also have to do with the quality and number of candles to be used, the correct type of altar, the nature of the music employed, the use of flowers, the color, quality and style of vestments. In general, they include all those regulations and customs that govern public divine worship. They constitute the liturgy in its external sense.

But in its deeper nature, the liturgy is really the continuation of the priesthood of our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ. Liturgy has been described as "the public worship of the Church, through which the priesthood of Jesus Christ is continued, the work of redemption is renewed, the greatest glory is given to God through Christ, and the grace of redemption is communicated to the faithful who unite themselves with Christ."

From what we have already seen, we may conclude that the most important liturgical act is the Mass. All that is noble and beautiful is therefore used to give external expression to the mystery of the Mass. Liturgical art, liturgical symbolism, liturgical song and chant, liturgical prayer, liturgical books, liturgical actions, all these combine in the Mass to continue the public worship of God which the priesthood of Christ introduced. The liturgy of the Mass renews the work of redemption, and communicates the grace of redemption to the faithful.

Purposes of Liturgy

Every act of liturgy must be intended to glorify God through expressions of praise, thanksgiving, atonement and petition. The liturgy does this particularly by giving prominence to the human life of Christ through the various phases of the Church Year. By honoring the Blessed Mother, the Apostles and the saints, God's work of sanctification of human souls is praised.

Another important purpose of the liturgy is the sanctifying of men, by the external part of the ceremonies as well as by their internal effects. These ceremonies communicate grace to souls properly disposed, and the faithful are instructed by the Scriptural readings during Mass. The reverent and beautiful action of the ceremonies strengthens faith and makes each participant at the sacrifice strongly conscious of the oneness of the Church. The heart is likewise refined and refreshed by the beauty of religious art and the glorious chants of the divine service. Remember, however, that all these are secondary purposes of the liturgy. The primary purpose is first and last to glorify God.

The Church insists that all the laws governing the practice of the liturgy be carried out with uniformity and exactness — a most wise provision. A knowledge of the heart of liturgy will protect us from putting too much stress on our own favorite methods of worship, and will help us to follow with appreciation those rites which the Church has judged most efficacious for uniting us with Christ.

Sources of the Liturgy of the Mass

The Liturgy began with the sacrifices of the Old Law. God Himself, as we have seen, commanded the method of sacrifice, which was followed until Christ came to earth. This liturgy of the Old Law was not abandoned with Christ's coming —it was perfected at the institution of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist at the Last Supper.

Up to the Offertory (which follows the Mass of the Catechumens) the principal source of the liturgy was the Synagogue. This is explained by the fact that most of the early converts to Christianity were Jews. Even after their conversion, the early Christians continued to attend the Jewish services in the Temple, until persecution drove them out. Thereafter they continued the liturgy of the Synagogue in their own homes. Refer to the early part of the Mass in your Missal and notice the source of the prayers and the ceremonies.

From the Offertory on we have the liturgy of the Last Supper. Notice how the words that precede the Consecration recapitulate at once the action of the Last Supper and the action of the Mass:

"Who the day before He suffered took bread into His holy and venerable hands."	Corresponding to the Offertory, including all the offering prayers.
"And having lifted up His eyes to heaven, to Thee, God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee . . . "	Corresponding to the Preface of the Mass which leads to the Sanctus.
"[He] blessed it"	Corresponding to the Consecration.
"[He] broke it"	Corresponding to the fraction of the Bread.
"And gave it to His disciples"	Corresponding to the Communion.

Thus the two main sources of liturgy evident in the Mass are (1) the ceremonies of the Synagogue and (2) the acts of the Last Supper.

From these two main lines we see developed the two principal divisions of the Mass:

1. *The Mass of the Catechumens.* The catechumens (those under instruction) were not permitted to remain when the Sacrifice of the Mass proper began, with the Offertory. The part of the Mass which they could attend, called the Mass of the Catechumens, consists of the prayers at the foot of the altar, the Introit, the Kyrie, the Gloria, the Oration, the Epistle, the Gradual, Alleluia and Tract, the Gospel and the Creed. This preparatory part of Mass as it is celebrated today is the service of the Synagogue in its Christianized form. In the Synagogue Scripture was read, prayers were said, the Psalms of David were sung, exhortations were given. The Gospel according to Luke (4:16-21) records how Jesus Himself read in the Synagogue and commented on what He had read. As the catechumens attended only this part of divine service, it was found to be a natural time for

teaching them the prophecies of the Old Testament and the lessons of the New. To the elements of the Synagogue were thus added the Epistles, the Gospels and a sermon.

2. *The Mass of the Faithful,* from the Offertory to the end. Old liturgies testify that after the Gospel or Creed, the deacon cried out in a loud voice: "Depart, catechumens; depart, ye possessed; depart, ye that do penance." After they had gone, he said: "They have been dismissed." Then the Eucharistic Sacrifice proper began in the presence of the faithful, who had been permitted to remain. This part is therefore called the Mass of the Faithful. Its three principal actions are the Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion. When we study them, we shall see that they repeat substantially the actions and words of our Lord at the Last Supper. The Offertory is the preparation for the sacrifice; the Consecration is the consummation of the sacrifice; the Communion is the participation in the sacrifice.

We do not know just when the prayers and ceremonies of the Mass were fixed in formal arrangement. The Apostles probably outlined the chief points of Christian liturgy, and the bishops, in order to furnish a dignified setting for the Consecration, formulated a definite series of prayers and practices. The Apostles imitated Christ's actions and words at the Last Supper from their memory of the event; and not at the altar alone, for the Acts of the Apostles speaks of Mass offered in private homes.

Some of the ceremonies and appurtenances as we have them today very likely were not a part of the ritual originally but had instead a practical immediate purpose. Hands were washed for the purpose of cleansing. Candles were used to give needed light. The vestments themselves were, as we know, merely the dress of the early Christians. With time, the practical aspect of these things lessened, and they have remained principally as ritual.

Kinds of Liturgies

Not all liturgies are exactly alike. They agree in the two essentials discussed above, but differ in forms of expression. The Roman, or Latin, liturgy, with which we are familiar, traces its origin back to Rome and the days of Saint Peter. The Gallican rite had an early origin in Gaul, where the Roman rite gradually took its place — adopting, however, many of its practices. An old Spanish liturgy, the Mozarabic, was also replaced by the Roman at the suggestion of Gregory VII. Two chapels in Spain continue to observe this ancient liturgy at certain times of the year. The Milanese liturgy, which is sometimes called the Ambrosian rite, is still used in the Archdiocese of Milan. It was once used throughout northern Italy and even beyond the Alps, in central Europe.

The foregoing liturgies belong to the West. Various Eastern Churches in communion with the Holy See (called the Uniat Churches) have their own special Mass rites. These are of great antiquity, and their language is an archaic form of the language spoken by the people.

In all these liturgies, despite their differences, the form of Consecration is substantially the same as in the Roman liturgy.

How the Roman Liturgy Was Preserved and Unified

The need for regulation of the liturgy by a supreme authority was felt early in the history of the Church. In the second century, Pope Saint Sixtus I commanded that only the priests be permitted to touch the sacred vessels. Pope Saint Stephen I ordered that priests wear the sacred vestments only at the altar. Pope Saint Felix I ordered that the tombs of the martyrs should be used as altar tables for the celebration of Mass. The Popes made many other decrees confirming by official declarations customs that had long been practised, such as the chanting of the Sanctus, the mixing of a few drops of water with the wine to be consecrated, etc.

An early Pope much concerned with liturgical regulation was Saint Gregory the Great. He is in fact called the "Father of Liturgy." He is traditionally credited with improving the sacred chants and stabilizing the whole great body of liturgical matter to such an extent that it will always carry the mark of his work and personality.

As we have seen, the Roman rite gradually assumed greater importance than the others. In the thirteenth century especially the Franciscan Order, which had adopted it, helped to make it more widely known in its vast missions. In 1570, Pope Pius V commanded that the Roman liturgy replace the other rites. The only ones permitted to continue in use were those which were two hundred years old or more. This explains why the Carthusian, Dominican and Carmelite Orders still use a rite somewhat different from the Roman.

The Council of Trent met in the sixteenth century to combat the effects of the Protestant revolt. Among its achievements was a more exact definition of the purposes of liturgy and more rigid regulation of liturgical matters. Printing was developed to a useful point at this time, so that liturgical books could be more widely distributed than in the days of the painful and slow method of copying by hand. The Fathers of the Council, therefore, suggested to the Pope that the liturgical books of the Church be revised. These revised books were printed and distributed throughout the Latin Church. Near the end of the sixteenth century, the Sacred Congregation of Rites was established by Pope Sixtus V. This organization regulates the sacred liturgy and superintends the carrying out of the rites prescribed by Holy Mother Church.

Liturgical Books

The liturgical books are: the Missal, which contains the prayers and ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; the Breviary, or divine office, from which the priest is obliged to recite every day; the Ritual, which lists the proper rites for administering the sacraments, various rites of blessing and other priestly functions; the Pontifical, which contains the ceremonies for services conducted by a bishop; the Ceremonial, giving rubrical directions for cathedrals; and the Martyrology, a calendar of the saints with brief notes on their lives.

Modern Popes, including Pius IX and Pius X, have done much to enhance the liturgy, especially in the field of church music. These Pontiffs have also helped the faithful to realize that the foundation of Catholic Action is the liturgy — a point which we shall discuss later on.

The Liturgical Movement

Today there is a general liturgical movement which aims to instruct the laity in a more intelligent following of the liturgy. The true spirit of Christianity is one that stresses the relation of Christians with one another because of their oneness in Christ. By uniting in the corporate prayers of the Church, that consciousness of unity is fostered. But many people, instead of co-offering the Sacrifice of the Mass with the celebrant and the rest of the congregation, place a wall of private devotions between themselves and the altar. They lose sight of the august character of the Mass. The liturgical movement aims to encourage more active participation of the faithful in the Mass; to restore the solemnities of Sunday High Mass and Vespers to the importance they enjoyed during the Middle Ages; to spread improved knowledge of the sacraments and sacramentals; to revive an understanding of the spirit of the liturgical year.

The furtherance of the liturgical movement cannot fail to have the result of a quickened spiritual and moral life. The liturgy has been called beautifully, "Christ and all Christians at prayer." These words express the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, and show us with what deep intimacy the ceremonies of our religion bind our lives to the life of our Divine Saviour.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why must God be glorified by everything in the world? How do creatures without the use of reason glorify God? Why must man glorify God by planned acts? Why must man glorify God by acts of worship?
2. Why has the Church formulated rules of worship? Whose actions do church regulations of worship govern? What con-

stitutes the externals of the liturgy? What is the deeper nature of the liturgy? How has liturgy been described? Why is the Mass the most important liturgical act? What means does the Church use to develop her liturgy?

3. What is the *purpose of the liturgy?* In what *particular* way does the liturgy glorify God? How may the liturgy sanctify man? strengthen faith? refine the heart? Why should we have a knowledge of the heart of the liturgy?
4. What was the beginning of the liturgy in the Old Law? the New Law? What is the principal *source of the liturgy* up to the Offertory of the Mass? How is this explained? Where in the Mass is the liturgy of the Last Supper? What is the relation of the Last Supper to the Mass?
5. What is the Mass of the Catechumens? Of what prayers does it consist? What was the service of the Synagogue? Why were the Epistle, Gospel and sermon added to the Mass of the Catechumens?
6. What is the Mass of the Faithful? In the old liturgies how did the Mass of the Catechumens end? What are the principal actions of the Mass of the Faithful? What do these actions represent? What do we know of the development of the Christian liturgy? What ceremonies may have been purely practical in the early Church?
7. In what two essentials do Christian liturgies agree? What is the source of the Roman liturgy? What other liturgies belong to the West?
8. How was the *Roman liturgy preserved and unified?* Why? Why is Saint Gregory the Great called the "Father of Liturgy"? What effect did the command of Pope Pius V in 1570 have upon the Roman liturgy? Why did the Council of Trent meet? When? How was the liturgy of the Mass affected by the Council of Trent? What is the Sacred Congregation of Rites? When was it established? by whom?
9. What are the *liturgical books?* What does the Missal contain? the Breviary? the Ritual? the Pontifical? the Ceremonial? the Martyrology? How have recent Popes contributed to development of the liturgy?

10. What is the aim of the *liturgical movement?* What is the true spirit of Christianity? Why should we unite in corporate prayer? How do many people place a wall between themselves and the altar? What has the liturgy been called?

Religious Practices:

1. Promote conscious unity at Mass by uniting in the corporate prayers.
2. Explain to someone what you have learned about the Mass in your discussion club.

Unit Two

LESSON VII

THE LITURGICAL YEAR; TYPES OF MASSES

THE Catholic's everyday life must find its motive power and its strength in the Blessed Eucharist. We must look to the love of God in the Eucharist for the grace and energy to live well here on earth. Each day we are called upon to make decisions, to solve problems, to exercise will-power. This is not an easy task, but Christ our Lord has given us many supernatural helps in performing it.

One of the most powerful aids we have to daily holiness is the liturgical year. In the liturgical year we have a complete picture of our religion which affords us immeasurable strength and comfort; we live through an annual celebration of the mysteries of our redemption and we rejoice in the heroic memory of the saints. If we know the nature and the message of the various feasts of the year, and celebrate them in the liturgical spirit of the Church, we will have at our command all we need in order to be good Catholics twenty-four hours a day. For the liturgical year keeps us from forgetting Christ. It makes Him live for us in every phase of His life on earth, from the crib to the cross. It is no mere historical calling to mind of what has gone by; in the cycles of feasts and the seasons of the liturgical year we *live* in the unfolding life of Christ.

Divisions of the Liturgical Year

The liturgical year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, the Sunday between November 27 and December 3. Consult your calendar and note when it occurs this year. The liturgical year ends on the Saturday preceding the first Sunday of Advent.

Two cycles of celebration operate at one time during the year. (1) The major cycle is the Proper of the Season (Temporal Cycle), which shows Christ in the setting of the mysteries of our religion, and thus includes all feasts of our Lord and the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. Operating simultaneously with it is (2) the Proper of the Saints (Sanctoral Cycle), which is composed of the feasts honoring the saints in heaven, in whom the work of redemption has been accomplished.

The Purposes of the Liturgical Year

Thus the chief purposes of the liturgical year are (1) to give us the means of living over again with Christ every event in His life here on earth; and (2) to keep in our minds and hearts the heroic models of the saints. By the celebration of these feasts, the Church is kept united to Christ and His saints.

The liturgical year is celebrated through the divine office (the prayers which priests, clerics and nuns must say every day), but chiefly through the Mass. By means of the section called the Proper of the Season, the mysteries of man's salvation through Christ are celebrated. Each feast gives a special character to the Mass. Christ comes to us at every celebration of Mass, but, as it were, in different states of His earthly life. On Christmas we are with the Saviour in the stable of Bethlehem, and our hearts burn with that charity for all our fellow-men which brought Him to earth. On Holy Thursday we rejoice in the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. On Easter Sunday we exult in the triumphant resurrection of our Saviour. In the section called the Proper of the Saints, we honor the memory of the saints. They give us encouragement and inspiration to different virtues, for they too had to endure the same trials and temptations we face.

In the Saint Andrew Missal we have a beautiful figure of speech which makes clear the simultaneous operation of the two cycles, the Proper of the Season and the Proper of the Saints:

"Resting upon one another, these two cycles form, as it were, an immense monstrance set with precious stones. In the center is the Host, or the Mass of the Faithful with the three parts which constitute it: the Offertory, the Consecration and the Communion.

"Around it is the Mass of the Catechumens which varies every day, whereby at the altar, with luminous rays, we are shown the different mysteries on each Sunday and solemnity of the Proper of the Time (Season). Then in the intervals left free, like lesser rays, shine the feasts in honor of the saints.

"The Church carries this divine sun through the world at all times, raises it daily toward heaven in her liturgical worship, that by it we may offer to God an ever-renewed homage of our gratitude, and receive from it the treasures of grace and holiness."

The Temporal Cycle

The Proper of the Season is divided into two parts, (a) the Christmas Cycle and (b) the Easter Cycle. Each of these two great cycles has three periods, and each period has a definite purpose: (1) before the feast, a period of preparing the soul for it; (2) during the feast, to provide means of celebrating it with proper reverence; and (3) after the feast, to permit the soul to enjoy the happiness of the special character of the feast.

(a) Christmas Cycle, or Mystery of the Incarnation

The first period is Advent, which lasts for four weeks. Advent is a time of preparation during which we long for the advent, or coming, of the Promised Redeemer, just as did the patriarchs and prophets. The season is one of penance and prayerful expectation, during which violet vestments are worn. Reference to the Missal will give you a richer conception of the special characteristics of this season. Two comings of Christ are brought before our minds. The first was at His birth, when He came in "humility, poverty and gentleness." The second coming, on the Last Day, will find Him no longer a gentle, lowly Child, but a strong King and a just Judge.

The Church does not forget, however, that a note of joy cannot be kept out of this season of penance. She is preparing for her happiest feast. Therefore, she has inserted Gaudete Sunday (from the Latin *gaudere,* "to rejoice"), the Third Sunday of Advent, on which she sings her joy in anticipation of the great event for which she is making ready. Rose vestments are worn on Gaudete Sunday.

Consult your Missal and note that much reference is made during Advent to the words of John the Baptist and to the Blessed Mother. Why should this be so?

The second period of the Christmas Cycle includes the vigil, the feast itself and the octave of Christmas, up to the feast of the Epiphany, commemorating the visit of the Magi. This season reminds us not only of the birth of the Incarnate Word of God, but also of His continual birth in the hearts of men through sanctifying grace and Holy Communion. The Epiphany commemorates His manifestation to the world. White vestments are now worn.

The third period of the Christmas Cycle is the time after Epiphany, which has from two to six Sundays. It reminds us of the youth of our Divine Lord, and the years of His hidden life in Nazareth, when He practised humility, poverty and obedience. Green vestments are worn.

(b) The Easter Cycle, or Mystery of the Redemption

This cycle begins between January 18 and February 22, depending upon the date of the Easter moon. It also has the three periods, before, during and after the feast.

There are nine weeks of preparation leading up to the feast of Easter, divided thus: (1) Septuagesima, a period of three weeks which brings to mind the public life of Christ; (2) Lent, beginning on Ash Wednesday, and portraying the forty days' fast of our Lord in the desert, in which we take part by forty days of penance; in Passiontide, the last two weeks of Lent, we recall the sufferings of Christ and His death on Calvary, and resolve to die with Him by dying to our sins. Violet vestments are worn during this period of preparation for Easter, except on the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday, from the Latin *laetari,* "to be glad"); this Sunday anticipates the happiness of

Easter, as Gaudete Sunday anticipates the happiness of Christmas, and rose vestments are worn in token of its special character.

The second part of the Easter Cycle is the Easter season itself, sometimes called Paschaltide. Now we are permitted to take part in the greatest of all the feasts. At Easter, and during its octave, our soul rises with Christ and lives with Him while He establishes His Church. It also ascends with Him to heaven on Ascension Day.

Paschaltide closes with the Feast of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost descends into our souls, filling them with the fire of Divine Love. During this part of the Easter Cycle white and red vestments are worn.

The third period is the time after Pentecost, which carries on to the end of the Church Year. During this time the Christian is reminded that he must work and pray. Many of the feasts are in honor of the saints, our models.

The twenty-three to twenty-eight weeks of the Pentecost period show us the fruits of holiness which the Holy Ghost and the Eucharist develop in the Church and her saints to the end of time. Green vestments are worn during this period.

The Sanctoral Cycle

The feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle are arranged according to a certain order of dignity — feasts of (1) the Blessed Mother of God, (2) the angels, (3) the saints associated with the Incarnation, (4) Saint Peter, Saint Paul and the other Apostles, (5) national saints, (6) patrons of dioceses and parishes, (7) the anniversaries of the dedication of churches, (8) martyrs, (9) Pontiffs (Bishops and Popes), (10) Doctors (teachers of the Church), (11) confessors (those whose lives and doctrine have witnessed to Christ), (12) virgins and other holy women.

The principal feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle during the Christmas season are: the Immaculate Conception, December 8, a holyday of obligation; Saint Stephen, the first martyr, December 26; Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist, December 27; the Holy Innocents, December 28; the Purification, February 2, on which day candles are blessed.

The principal feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle during the Easter season are: Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Virgin Mary and Patron of the Universal Church, March 19; the Annunciation, March 25; Saint Joseph the Workingman, May 1; the Queenship of Mary, May 31; Saint John the Baptist, June 24; Saints Peter and Paul, June 29; the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, August 15, a holyday of obligation; All Saints', November 1, a holyday of obligation; All Souls', November 2.

Types of Masses

Each day in each season has its special temporal or festive character. The Mass of the day is celebrated with special prayers peculiar to the mystery or saint being commemorated. These prayers change from day to day. Those that change are found only, for the most part, in the Mass of the Catechumens, whereas the prayers of the Mass of the Faithful remain unchanged from day to day.

The color of the vestments also varies with the feast that is being celebrated, as a symbol of the feast's individual character. White, the color of light, is a symbol of glory, purity and innocence. It is used on feasts of the Holy Trinity, our Lord, the Blessed Mother, the angels, confessors, holy women not martyrs, and on the Sundays after Easter. Red, the color of fire and blood, is a symbol of love. It is used, therefore, on the feasts of the Passion of Christ (and those of the Cross) and of the martyrs. It is also used on Pentecost Sunday, because the Spirit of Love descended upon the Apostles on that day in the form of fiery tongues.

Green is the middle color of the Church, as it is a middle color in nature. It is a symbol of hope for days that have not a special joyful character, and yet are not days of penance and mourning. Green is used on the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost.

Violet, which resembles the dark grey of ashes, is a symbol of the holy sadness which is pleasing to God. It suggests the violet of the woods, which is retiring and humble. Violet is used during Advent and Lent, on the three Sundays preceding the First Sunday of Lent, on vigils except those of Epiphany, Ascension and Pentecost, and on rogation days. Rose is not an added liturgical color, strictly speaking. It is a less penitential shade than violet, and, like violet, is close to red. It is used on the Third Sunday of Advent and the Fourth Sunday of Lent to strike a note of joyful anticipation in the midst of the penitential season.

Black is the opposite of white. It suggests death, absence of light, the tomb and deep mourning. Black is used on Good Friday, when the House of God is a house of mourning, for on Good Friday the Divine Victim perished on the cross for our sins. Black is also the color used in Masses for the dead.

Cloth of gold may take the place of white, red or green (though not of violet or black). It must be of real gold thread, however. Gold is not to be considered a liturgical color in itself. It is a substitute and takes on the symbolic meaning of the color for which it is substituted. Blue is not permitted, except by special indult; for example in some dioceses in Spain the Pope has given permission to use sky-blue vestments at all Masses of the Immaculate Conception.

(a) Masses Offered for a Special Purpose

Votive Masses and Masses of Requiem are Masses offered for a special purpose. A Votive Mass is defined by rubricists as a Mass which is not in accordance with the office of the day, but is said according to the wish of the priest, the wish of the person having the Mass celebrated, or by order of the bishop or the Supreme Pontiff. There must be a good reason for substituting a Votive Mass for the Mass of the feast or season. Priests, for example, often say a Mass in honor of the Blessed Mother on Saturdays, when the regulations of the Church allow it. The Nuptial Mass is a Votive Mass.

Requiem Masses are said for the benefit of the dead on the day of death, sometimes on the third day after death because

Christ rose to a new life on the third day; on the seventh day, in imitation of the Israelites who mourned Joseph for seven days; on the thirtieth day, in imitation of the thirty days' mourning of the Israelites for the deaths of Moses and Aaron; and finally, on the anniversary of the actual day of death. The three Masses offered by each priest on All Souls' Day are Requiem Masses. The prayers of Requiem Masses plead for the release of souls from purgatory. Note the origin of the word "requiem" in the Introit (Latin version and English translation) of the Mass for the Dead.

(b) Low, High and Solemn High Mass

Low Mass is so called because it is said in a low tone of voice, and not sung or chanted aloud, as is the High Mass. The Low Mass is usually read by the priest in an ordinary speaking voice. There is generally one server. Two candles only are lighted; a bishop, however, may have four candles.

The High Mass is one in which parts are sung, or chanted in a high voice, and other parts are spoken. The choir assists in the singing of this Mass. The servers respond to the prayers which are recited, or spoken in an ordinary voice. Six candles are proper for a High Mass.

When High Mass is celebrated with the assistance of deacon and subdeacon and a full corps of other ministers, it is called a Solemn High Mass. In some parts of Europe it is called Grand because of the added ritualistic display, such as the burning of incense to symbolize zeal and the fragrance of prayer rising to heaven. At least six candles are lighted for a Solemn High Mass.

(c) Pontifical Mass

The Pontifical Mass is a Solemn Mass celebrated by a bishop. In his own diocese the bishop is assisted by a priest, deacon and subdeacon, and two deacons of honor. Outside his own diocese the deacons of honor are omitted.

The Papal Mass is a Solemn High Mass celebrated by the Supreme Pontiff. Ceremonies appropriate to the dignity of the Holy Father's office are added.

(d) The Solemn Liturgical Action of the Passion and Death of Our Lord

Formerly the liturgical service for Good Friday was called the Mass of the Presanctified. In the Restored Rites for Holy Week, however, which in 1956 became mandatory for the faithful of Roman-rite churches, the Good Friday liturgy is called the Solemn Liturgical Action of the Passion and Death of the Lord. This service is not truly a sacrifice (nor was the Mass of the Presanctified), for on the day of the Lord's death no consecration of bread or of wine takes place. The Liturgical Action now used on Good Friday does, however, provide for the reception of Holy Communion by the faithful, the hosts being those consecrated on the previous day. In the Mass of the Presanctified only the priest consumed a previously consecrated host.

The Cross and the Mass

Our real study of the liturgical year must be done with the Missal itself as our textbook. Therefore the most important part of this lesson is the section of Discussion Aids which follows. No content material here could possibly give us that intimate familiarity with the Mass which we need. It can be developed only by studying the spirit of the liturgy, of which this lesson presents a mere outline.

The liturgical year begins, continues and ends with the Cross. Even at Christmas we offer thanksgiving to the Child, the little Lamb of God, Who came into the world to be slain for our salvation. At Easter, a season of overpowering happiness, we realize that this happiness came from the Cross which led to the splendor of the Resurrection. At Pentecost we are aware of the culmination of the Sacrifice of the Cross in the descent of the Holy Ghost. We are never permitted to forget the Cross.

The entire liturgical year has a Eucharistic foundation or character. Every liturgical feast of the year, whether in the Temporal Cycle or Sanctoral Cycle, has as its chief activity the Sacrifice of the Mass for the day.

The Saviour of mankind is Eucharistically present throughout the liturgical year. As we have now seen, Christ lives His entire life of redemption, from the day of His birth in the stable of Bethlehem to the descent of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Sunday, in His Mystical Body, the Church. As members of that Body we live with Him.

Let us pray that we may receive His grace, and imitate the blessed model of His saints.

Discussion Aids:

1. What does the Catholic find in the Blessed Eucharist? How is the liturgical year an aid to holiness? How does the liturgical year keep us from forgetting Christ?
2. When does the *liturgical year* begin? this year? When does it end? What is the major cycle of the liturgical year? What does the major cycle show? What is the Proper of the Saints?
3. What are the two chief *purposes of the liturgical year?* How is the liturgical year celebrated through the divine office? the Proper of the Season? How does each feast give a special character to the Mass? What does the Saint Andrew Missal say of the two cycles?
4. How is the Proper of the Season divided? What three periods does each cycle have? What is the purpose of the period before the feast? during the feast? after the feast? (a) What is the first period of the Christmas Cycle? How long does it last? What characterizes this season? What is brought before our minds? What is Gaudete Sunday? What is the second period of the Christmas Cycle? What is its purpose? What is the third period? Why is it celebrated? (b) What is the Easter Cycle? When does it begin? How are the nine weeks of preparation divided? What does each period bring to mind? What is Laetare Sunday? What is the second period of the Easter Cycle? What is its purpose? How is it celebrated? What is the third period of the Easter Cycle? What does this period show us?

5. How are the feasts of the *Sanctoral Cycle* arranged? What are the principal feasts of the Sanctoral Cycle during the Christmas season? the Easter season?
6. Why do the prayers of special feasts change? Why does the color of vestments vary? When is white used? Why? When is red used? Why? When is green used? Why? When is violet used? Why? When is black used? Why? Gold? When is the use of blue vestments permitted?

   (a) What is a Votive Mass? a Requiem Mass? When are Requiem Masses offered? Why?

   (b) What is a Low Mass? How is it celebrated? What is a High Mass? a Solemn High Mass? Why is it called "Grand" in some parts of Europe?

   (c) What is a Pontifical Mass? a Papal Mass?

   (d) In the Restored Rites for Holy Week, what major privilege has been granted to the faithful on Good Friday?

   (e) Why should we study the spirit of the liturgy? Why is the cross so important in the liturgical year? What is the foundation of the liturgical year? its chief activity? Why should we imitate the saints?

Religious Practices:

1. Each time you attend Mass, select for imitation a particular virtue from the life of Christ emphasized in the lessons of the Holy Sacrifice.
2. Study the courage and heroism of your favorite saints for each season of the liturgical year.

Unit Two

LESSON VIII

USE OF THE MISSAL; EXTERNAL OBJECTS OF THE MASS

What the Missal Is

WE HAVE already learned that the Missal is one of the six official books used by the Church in her sacred liturgy. In fact, the Missal is the most important one of all because it enshrines the greatest treasures of our redemption in its sublime words. It embodies the rites to be followed and the various prayers to be said in the celebration of Mass.

Thus the Missal is fittingly reverenced. Note how it is carried by the deacon in solemn procession, and incensed with great ceremony; how the priest kisses it.

During the Middle Ages the Missal was highly decorated. The writing and miniatures were delicate and brilliantly colored. The covers were of ivory or gold and silver, often set with gems.

The Missal is of great historical interest, containing as it does prayers from many of the ancient languages and practices that go far back to the time of the first Jewish tabernacles. The literary beauty of its prayers has been the study of scholars.

Why We Should Use the Missal

There are many reasons why we should use the Missal:

1. By using it we follow more closely the various actions of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and as a result our worship of God is more intelligent.

2. Through the Missal we enter more perfectly into the spirit of the various seasons and feasts. In that way Christ's life and

the lives of the saints produce grace in our souls that will help us to serve God faithfully.

3. The prayers of the Mass are the prayers of Christ's Spouse, the Church. By expressing our petitions and offering them in union with the Church and Christ, our Highpriest, we are assured of a more ready answer to our prayers.

Parts of the Missal

For purposes of instruction, the Missal can be considered divided into two parts: (a) the Ordinary of the Mass, and (b) the Proper of the Mass.

(a) The Ordinary of the Mass

The Ordinary is, as it were, the framework of the Mass. It contains those rites and prayers of the Holy Sacrifice which change not at all, or very little, throughout the Church Year. They are: the Prayers at the foot of the Altar, the Kyrie Eleison, Gloria, Credo, Oblation Prayers, Lavabo, Canon (including Preface and Sanctus), Lord's Prayer, Agnus Dei, Communion, final prayers.

(b) The Proper of the Mass

All the parts not in the Ordinary are called the Proper of the Mass. These parts vary with the mystery being celebrated or the saint being commemorated. Each Proper prayer expresses a sentiment, petition or doctrine related to the particular feast being celebrated at the altar.

The Proper parts of the Mass are: the Introit, Collect, Epistle, Gradual, Tract, Sequence, Gospel, Offertory, Secret, Communion verse, Postcommunion prayer.

The Proper of the Season contains those Masses used in the Temporal Cycle. It therefore has the Masses of Advent, the Christmas and Post-Christmas seasons, Lent, Holy Week, the Masses of Sundays and important weekdays throughout the year, and also of feasts without a fixed date, from Easter to Advent.

These Masses celebrate the mysteries in the life of our Divine Lord, as we have already seen.

The feasts of the more important saints usually have all the Proper parts especially arranged for each Mass. The section of the Missal containing these parts is called the Proper of the Saints. But there are thousands of other saints commemorated in the Masses, and if Proper parts for each one were included, the Missal would be too large for ordinary use. For that reason, certain Proper parts which are repeatedly used are put together in another section called the Common of Saints. The Proper of the Saints, under each day, will tell you where to go in the Common for the Proper parts of the Mass in honor of the saint being commemorated.

The directions for the use of the Missal are highly theoretical. Nothing can explain the working of the Missal so well as the Missal itself. Therefore an important part of this lesson is that devoted to the use of the Missal.

External Objects of the Mass

Things and places which are sacred and consecrated are necessary to the reverent and proper celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The Church has legislated to this effect, ordering that all articles of worship must conform not only to the practical uses for which they are intended, but also to the highest standards of Christian art. The material from which they are made must be as rich and perfect as possible. In selecting liturgical objects, the personal taste of individuals and the fashions of the time should not be considered.

When Mary Magdalen bathed the feet of Jesus with delicate and precious spikenard, He praised her for it: "She has done Me a good turn" (Matthew 26:10). After Calvary, His devoted friends embalmed His holy Body with rare ointments. If Christ ordained that His Body in His earthly life should be so honored, He also wishes His Eucharistic Body and its dwelling-place to be honored with a display of beauty and taste. There may be occasions and places where it is impossible to spend large sums of money for the decoration of the House of God; however, all the sacred things can be kept clean and orderly, and from cleanliness they will gain a simple and dignified beauty.

The majesty of heaven comes to us in Holy Mass. The Sacrifice of the Eucharist is so sublime and holy that nothing is too valuable to be used in its action. The glories of the Mass during which the Body of the Lord rests on the altar and His Precious Blood fills the chalice of Redemption demand the most magnificent treasures of the natural world to harmonize with their spiritual splendor.

The articles used in the Holy Sacrifice serve to glorify God. They also quicken devotion in the hearts of the faithful, and so aid in their sanctification. Each one of these articles of the Mass therefore must be made a sacred object, completely withdrawn from all other uses. This is done by the blessings and prayers of the Church. Many of the objects of the altar, because of this sanctification, must be moved and cleansed according to a prescribed formula and discipline.

The Altar

The first altar was the wooden table of the Last Supper. Our altars have always been either tables or tombs, thus commemorating the Last Supper and the burial of Christ. Three cloths cover the table of the altar for the practical purpose of absorbing the Precious Blood should it accidentally be spilled, but they serve likewise to remind us of the cloths in which our Lord was wrapped for burial; they also signify the Holy Trinity. Let us think of the altar in three ways; as (1) the Eucharistic table, (2) the mystical tomb, and (3) the sacred mountain where Jesus is transfigured and crucified.

Early altars were of wood. More permanent ones would not have been practical, as the pagans destroyed the Christian places of worship whenever they discovered them. During the days of peace in the Church, stately altars of gold, silver and precious stones were erected. Today the altar must be made of stone, except in special circumstances where this requirement cannot be met; in this case, at least that portion of the altar upon which the chalice and its appurtenances are placed must be of stone. A cloth, called the antependium, should be hung in front of the altar, unless the altar itself is already beautifully adorned.

The priest often kisses the middle of the altar during Mass. Here is the sacred stone which is a figure of Christ. Like Christ, it has upon it five marks. This stone must be cut from one block, symbolizing the Lamb of God "not one of (Whose) bones was broken." The altar-stone is also a tomb, containing the relics of saints, and three grains of incense. The relics remind us of the fact that in the days of persecution the tombs of the martyrs in the catacombs served as altars. Saint John in his vision saw "under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the Word of God" (Apocalypse 6:9).

The tabernacle wherein the Blessed Sacrament is reserved must be covered with rich materials the color of the day. It is usually shaped like a tower, the symbol of strength. The richness of the material and drapings of the tabernacle reminds us of the splendid tabernacles of the Old Law where the Ark of the Covenant was kept.

A crucifix must be kept above the tabernacle to remind us always that the unbloody sacrifice offered daily on the altar below is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary. The Church wishes the crucifix to be the most prominent appointment of the altar.

Candles of pure wax must be burnt on every altar during Mass. At Low Mass, as we have said, two candles are lighted (four for a bishop), and at Solemn High Mass the rule requires at least six. The candles had at first the practical use of lighting up the dark catacombs, but now they have only a mystical meaning. The Prophets called Christ a "light," and He referred to Himself as the "light of the world." His teaching is a light which helps us to see the beautiful and true and good.

A sanctuary lamp burns perpetually before the altar on which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved.

Three altar cards for the use of the priest stand upright on the altar. They contain certain portions of the Mass: the card at the Gospel side has the Gospel of Saint John; the large card in the center has on it the Gloria, the Credo, the prayers said at the Offertory, the form of Consecration, prayers before Communion, and the prayer before the last blessing. The card at the Epistle side contains the prayers said while putting water into the chalice and washing the fingers. The rubrics require only the center card, but custom has introduced the others.

We have already discussed the Missal, which may be compared to the seven-sealed book of Scripture which only Christ could open. The Missal remains shut upon the altar until the priest, representing Christ, comes to open it.

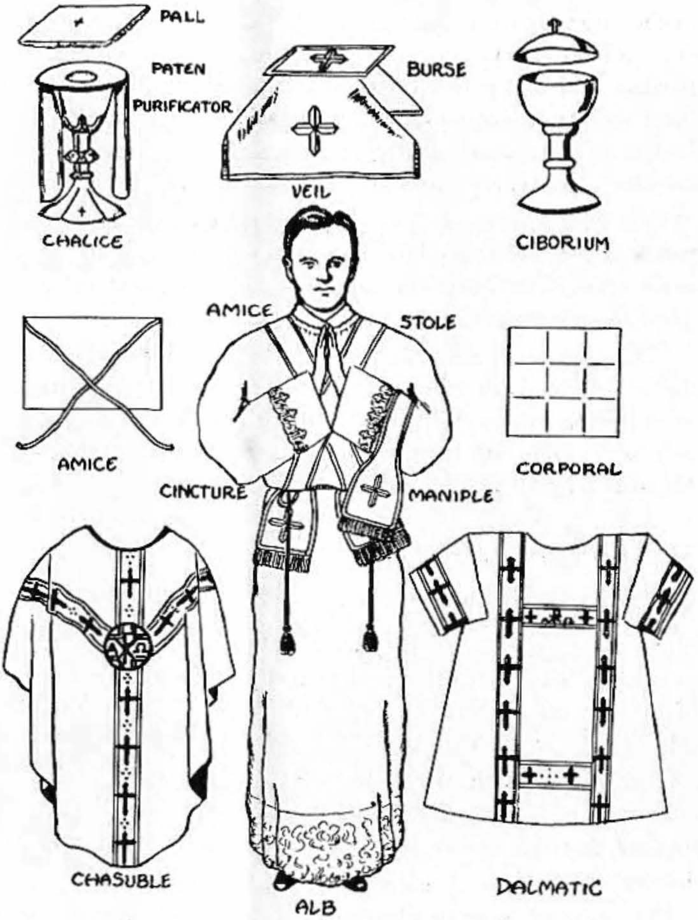
There are some other, less important necessities of the altar: the wax-cloth which covers the altar-stone, the bells which call our attention to the most sacred parts of the Mass, candlesticks, holy water, censers, incense, which is used at High Mass, a Missal-stand and flowers.

The Chalice and Paten

The sacred vessels used at the sacrifice are the chalice, the paten and the ciborium. They must always be made of precious metals. "We have vessels of silver and gold for the celebration of the mysteries, which are dedicated to divine service and are called holy," Saint Augustine said.

The chalice is the large Eucharistic cup in which the wine is consecrated into the Precious Blood. The rule of the Church requires that the chalice be of gold or silver, or at least that the cup be of silver gold-plated on the inside.

The paten is a small silver or gold dish, like a saucer, upon which the large host for consecration is placed until the Offertory. At different times during the Mass the consecrated Host rests on it. The paten must be of the same metal as the chalice and it must be plain. The portion of the paten which the Host touches must be gold. In ancient days the paten sometimes weighed twenty-five or thirty pounds, for it was made to hold all the bread to be consecrated at Mass.


PALL
PATEN
PURIFICATOR
BURSE
VEIL
CHALICE
CIBORIUM
AMICE
STOLE
AMICE
CORPORAL
CINCTURE
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CHASUBLE
ALB
DALMATIC

SACRED VESSELS and VESTMENTS

USED IN THE CELEBRATION OF MASS

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The words by which the chalice and paten are consecrated remind us that they symbolize the new grave in which the disciples laid the body of the Lord. On Holy Thursday this is brought out strongly when the Sacred Host is reserved in a chalice covered with a pall and the overturned paten. The chalice may be thought of as a symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for it too contains the Blood which paid the price of our salvation. The paten (the word is derived from the Latin *patere,* meaning "to be open") may be thought of as a symbol of the cross which held the Sacred Victim up to the view of the world: it bears the same Divine Body that hung on the cross.

The ciborium is the sacred vessel used to hold the small Hosts consecrated for the Communion of the faithful. It is shaped like the chalice, but it has a metal cover. It too must be of solid and respectable metal, and the cup must be gold-plated on the inside. In it the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the tabernacle, and from it the priest distributes Holy Communion.

Chalice Linens

The corporal is a square piece of linen folded in nine sections. It may have a small cross embroidered on its front edge, usually in red thread. The Body of Christ and the chalice of His Blood are consecrated on the corporal. It must therefore be of pure linen, kept spotlessly clean, and should be handled with reverence. The purificator, pall and corporal used in Holy Mass may not be given to a lay person to wash until after they have been washed by a cleric in major orders. The water of this first washing is poured into the sacrarium (a special receptacle which empties into the ground beneath the church).

The pall is a stiff piece of linen about five inches square with a tiny cross worked into the center, or even more richly decorated on its upper surface. It is used to cover the mouth of the chalice.

The purificator is a piece of linen about twenty inches long and twelve inches wide. It is folded in three parts so that it is about four inches wide. It is used for cleansing and wiping the chalice, for the fingers and mouth of the priest after Communion, and to wipe the paten before the consecrated Host is placed upon it. The Greeks use a sponge for this in memory of the sponge of the Crucifixion.

The corporal is kept in a special case open at one end, called the burse, which is square and stiff, and covered with cloth of the same color and material as the vestments of the day. The chalice veil also corresponds to the vestments of the day. It must be soft so that it will fall into gentle folds over the chalice. The chalice veil covers the sacred vessels in order to express proper reverence for them, and it also causes us to think of the deep and hidden mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Other articles used are wine- and water-cruets, a basin and a finger-towel.

Vestments of the Priest

If you were to be presented to the King and Queen of England you would be required to wear special clothing in keeping with the exalted dignity of the rulers of a great state. The priest at the altar must wear special clothing blessed for its noble usage, for he presides at the banquet of the King of heaven and earth.

Scripture compares the highpriest Simon dressed in his priestly vestments to "the morning star in the midst of a cloud, . . . the moon at the full, . . . the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds . . . the flower of roses in the days of the spring, . . . the lilies that are on the brink of the water, . . . the sweet-smelling frankincense in the time of summer, . . . a bright fire, . . . when he put on the robe of glory and was clothed with the perfection of power."

If the sacrifice of the Old Law demanded so much splendor, how much more splendidly must our priests be dressed to do proper honor to the fulfilment of that law in the reality of the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist!

Each of the vestments symbolizes spiritual virtues which make the priest a worthy representative of our Lord. Writers see many meanings in each vestment, but we will select only a few. We list the vestments in the order in which the priest puts them on.

The amice is a white linen cloth worn under the alb, covering the neck and shoulders. In vesting, the priest touches it to his head. It reminds us that Christ was treated as a criminal, for His head was covered by a cloth before He was scourged.

The alb, a long white linen garment, reminds us of the Transfiguration, interior purity, perseverance in good works, the Passion of the Immaculate Lamb, the white-arrayed saints of Saint John's vision, and the white garment which was put on Christ in mockery.

The cincture — a cord which the celebrant ties around his waist — may be made of silk or wool of the color of the day, but it is preferable that it be of white linen. It reminds us of both glory and shame. Saint John's vision of our Lord in heaven showed Him in a shining robe bound by a girdle of gold. But we also sadly recall the cords which bound His sacred Body to the pillar.

The maniple was originally a small handkerchief which the priest used to dry his face. He now keeps it on his left arm as a reminder that in his work with souls he is to forget the burden and pain of his labors and not grow weary in well-doing. It also suggests the cloth with which Veronica wiped the face of Christ. Another beautiful thought is that the maniple suggests the Divine Hands once bound with chains, now bound with love, whereas they might strike in punishment. Such should be the hands of the priest.

The stole is a long, narrow strip of cloth, a sign of priestly power. It reminds us, according to the prayers which the priest says in putting it on, of the justice and innocence lost by Adam and Eve, but restored by the death of Christ. It also represents the rope which was used to lead our Lord to Calvary.

The chasuble is the outer vestment which the priest wears. It was formerly a round cape with no side openings and covered the priest completely. The name comes from the Latin *casula,* meaning a little house. It represents the holy love with which the priest should shelter his flock, just as Christ shelters all mankind. The cross on the chasuble represents the cross of Calvary, and the cross which every priest must bear in patience and submission as an example to the faithful. The chasuble also represents the tunic which the soldiers placed on Jesus when they mockingly pretended to crown Him a king. The chasuble folded in front is frequently worn by the deacon and subdeacon, but generally they wear the dalmatic, which resembles the chasuble.

Individual fancy, and sometimes necessity, has caused this vestment in some countries to lose its grace and beauty. It is often a stiff, fiddle-shaped garment without the fullness and form of the early chasuble of the Roman Church. A movement is now on foot to restore what is called the Gothic vestment to popular usage. It will be found among the illustrations on page 76 of the text. "Gothic," however, is not the proper name to give to this fuller, draped vestment, because it merely represents an earlier stage of the development of the Roman vestment, and no rule of the Church has ever changed it.

The chasuble, maniple and stole should be of silk cloth. Gold and silver texture alone may be used instead of silk. All these vestments must be blessed before they are used. Worn-out vestments may not be put to profane uses, but are burned to avoid desecration.

It is valuable to know the significance of these external objects of the Mass. The knowledge will help to awaken in us a reverent attitude toward spiritual things, and will also help us to meditate on the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Each external article used in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an open book, the pages of which we may all read in order to learn thereby sorrow for our sins.

Discussion Aids:

1. What is the *Missal?* What does the Missal embody? Why is it reverenced? How? Why is the Missal of historical interest?
2. How does the *use of the Missal* help us to render intelligent worship? to serve God faithfully? to pray more fruitfully?
3. Why are there *"different parts" of the Missal?* What are they? (a) What prayers and rites does the Ordinary of the Mass contain? When are they used?

(b) What is the Proper of the Mass? Why do the Proper prayers vary? What are the Proper prayers? What Masses does the Proper of the Season contain? What are the Masses of the Temporal Cycle? What do these Masses celebrate? What is the Proper of the Saints? the Common of the Saints? Why should we have a working knowledge of the Missal?

4. Why are there *external objects* connected with the Mass? Why has the Church legislated regarding externals of the Mass? How did Magdalen honor Christ? His friends after Calvary? How does the majesty of heaven come to us in the Mass? What is the purpose of articles used in the Mass? How is each article made a sacred object?
5. What was the first *altar?* What do our altars commemorate? Why do three cloths cover the altar? In what three ways do we think of the altar? Why were early altars made of wood? Of what were altars made during days of peace in the Church? How are altars made today? Why does the priest often kiss the middle of the altar? Describe the altar-stone. What does it contain? Of what does it remind us? How is the tabernacle adorned? Why? Why must a crucifix be kept above the tabernacle? Why are candles used at Mass? What is their mystical meaning? Why are altar cards used? What prayers do they contain? What less important articles are necessities of the altar?
6. What are the *chalice and paten?* What does Saint Augustine say of them? What is the paten's use? What is the ciborium? What is its use?
7. What are the *chalice linens?* What is the use of the corporal? the purificator? the pall? Describe each.
8. What is the purpose of the *priest's vestments?* What does Scripture say of Simon in his priestly vestments? Why should our priests be vested? What is the amice? Why is it worn? What is the alb? the cincture? the maniple? the stole? the chasuble? How has the chasuble varied in shape? Why is it valuable to know the significance of the externals of the Mass?

Religious Practices:

1. Increase your working knowledge of the Missal.
2. Encourage others to make practical use of a Missal.

LESSON IX

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS ON THE MASS

THE Church places the very highest value on the Supreme Sacrifice of the Eucharist. Therefore she has issued throughout the centuries a great number of practical rules governing its celebration, rules which both command and forbid. These are given in the rubrics (from the Latin *ruber,* "red": the rubrics are the instructions for the actions of the Mass, and were originally written in the Missal in red), in canon law and in moral theology. No detail is too small to be regulated when it is necessary to insure the dignity of the sacrifice. We shall touch upon some of the most important precepts of the Church on the proper and worthy celebration of the mystery of redemption.

The Place for Celebrating Mass

An important consideration is that the place for the offering of Mass must be a suitable one. There are three such classes of places: (1) a consecrated or blessed church that has not lost its consecration or benediction; (2) a public or semi-public chapel or oratory, such as the chapel in a convent; (3) a house chapel, by papal permission.

In the early days of the Church Mass was celebrated in private houses. The practice was forbidden in the second half of the fourth century, and thereafter the only places of worship were public churches, except where papal permission was granted.

In the time of persecution, Mass was offered in any place available. Saint Dionysius of Alexandria writes: "Every place — the field, the wilds, the ship, the stable, the prison — became a temple for the performance of the sacred mysteries." There are some emergencies today when a bishop may grant temporary permission for Mass to be said elsewhere than in churches or chapels. Only the Holy See, however, has the right to grant permission for Masses to be celebrated in extraordinary places for long periods of time. Some of the emergencies in which a bishop might give temporary permission for Mass to be said in a place usually forbidden occur: when a church becomes ruined, or is too small for its congregation; during an epidemic, earthquake or flood; on a long journey; in gatherings of the armed forces in camps. The number of those who would be deprived of Mass under any of the above conditions must be more than one before permission may be granted.

Mass may be said on shipboard if permission has been obtained from the Apostolic Delegate and the seas are smooth.

Time for Celebrating Mass

In the worthy celebration of Mass, the matter of time is of vital importance. Three questions will be briefly considered under this heading: (1) the days on which Mass is allowed, (2) the number of Masses permitted on a single day, (3) the hour for saying Mass.

1. In the Roman rite the only day on which Mass *cannot* be said is Good Friday. Although the Restored Rites for Holy Week provide for the reception of Holy Communion by the faithful on Good Friday (see page 67), the Solemn Liturgical Action that takes place on that day is not truly a sacrifice — for there is no consecration.

The Church has placed many restrictions around the celebration of Mass on Holy Thursday. Besides the principal Mass, one or two low Masses are permitted in individual churches and public oratories; in semi-public oratories only one low Mass.

On Holy Saturday in most churches there is no Mass, since the Mass of the Easter Vigil, following on the Easter Vigil services, begins about midnight. In places where the Easter Vigil services are held earlier in the evening because of absolute necessity and with the permission of the bishop, the Mass of the Easter Vigil then occurs on Holy Saturday itself.

2. The general rule in regard to the number of Masses is that a priest may celebrate only one Mass in one day. Pope Alexander II gives as a reason for this rule the fact that Christ died but once and His death was sufficient for the redemption of the world. There are the following exceptions to this rule: (a) The priest may say another Mass in order to provide Viaticum for a dying person, even though the priest himself is not fasting. (b) On Christmas day and on the feast of All Souls, the priest may celebrate three Masses. (c) Special permission is sometimes given for a priest to say more than one Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation if it is necessary in order that the faithful may fulfill their religious duty of attending Mass, which is binding under pain of sin.

3. *Formerly* it was not allowed (under ordinary circumstances) to begin the celebration of Mass earlier than one hour before dawn, nor later than one hour after midday. In 1953, however, the Holy See ruled that bishops might allow evening Masses in their dioceses (after 4:00 P. M.) on certain days if they judged that there were persons in the diocese who would profit from this permission. On March 25, 1957, Pope Pius XII put into effect a new ruling which allows the Ordinaries of dioceses to grant permission for Holy Mass to be celebrated every day after noon should this be necessary for the spiritual welfare of a considerable number of the faithful. Certain restrictions remain, however, as to the time of Masses on Holy Thursday and on Holy Saturday and in regard to the hour of celebration of the Liturgical Action of Good Friday.

On Holy Thursday Masses are permitted only between 4:00 P. M. and 9:00 P. M. (except in cathedral churches, where the Mass of the Chrism, at which the holy oils are blessed, takes place in the morning). The Solemn Liturgical Action of Good Friday should take place about 3:00 P. M., but is permitted at noon or later but not beyond 9:00 P. M. The Easter Vigil service should begin between 10:00 P. M. and 11:00 P. M., so that the Mass following these services will start about midnight between Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. In places where it is absolutely necessary, the Mass of the Easter Vigil may, as explained above, be celebrated earlier in the evening.

The Eucharistic Fast

Beginning with March 25, 1957, all previous rules concerning the Eucharistic fast were replaced by Pope Pius XII with a new law which permits all the faithful to receive Holy Communion on any day after fasting from solid foods and alcoholic beverages for only three hours and from non-alcoholic beverages for one hour. The clergy must begin their fast three hours before beginning the celebration of Mass, the laity three hours before receiving Holy Communion. Water does not break the fast and may be taken at any time. The sick, even if not bedridden, may take non-alcoholic beverages and medicines, liquid or solid, at any time before Mass and Communion. The reason for these new rules was, of course, to enable the faithful to receive Holy Communion more frequently. In extending these privileges, the Holy Father nevertheless urged those who are able to do so to continue "to observe the old and venerable form" of the Eucharistic fast, and stressed that those who use the new concessions must compensate by becoming shining examples of Christian life and by performing works of penance and charity.

"The old and venerable form of Eucharistic fast" was the obligation which held up to 1953: to fast from midnight before Holy Communion by taking nothing by way of food or drink or medicine after that time. In 1953, however, Pope Pius XII relaxed the laws of the Eucharistic fast somewhat, ruling that the drinking of water no longer broke the fast, and granting privileges to certain categories of persons. It must be understood, however, that *the ruling of 1957,* given above, replaces all previous laws concerning the Eucharistic fast.

Servers at Mass

Usually the priest should be attended at the altar by at least one server of the male sex. The celebration of Mass without a server is permitted only in necessity. In his responses the server represents the entire congregation. A person of the female sex may not serve Mass at the altar, though in the absence of a male server she may give the responses to the celebrant from the pews.

Why Latin Is the Language of the Mass

The question as to why Latin is the language used at Mass troubles some people, chiefly because they do not realize the true nature of the Mass.

1. One answer to this question is that the Mass is an act "directed to God," not to the people. Though they know that the priest is offering adoration, thanksgiving, atonement and petition to God with them and for them, it is not absolutely essential that the faithful understand the words of this offering. With the modern movement to promote use of the Missal, however, most people follow the English translation of the liturgy with ease.

2. The use of Latin adds dignity and reverence to this noblest of all religious actions. It seems becoming that in so sacred a ceremony as the Mass the language be different from the ordinary speech of everyday life.

3. Uniformity is a first law of the Church and a mark of her unity. Therefore, since a very early date the Holy Sacrifice has been celebrated in the same language almost everywhere. The exception is the Uniat Churches of the East, which for very special reasons are permitted to use their own ancient liturgies.

4. The exactness of the notion expressed is preserved by the use of a dead language not subject to change and modification.

5. Unity in language also helps to preserve unity in faith.

6. By preserving the Latin in her liturgy, the Church has secured to herself the literary treasures of ancient Christendom.

Mass Stipends

In the early Church, the people gave the bread and wine that were used in the sacred service. Offerings of wheat and grapes were made at the Offertory, or at the end of the Mass of the Catechumens. These offerings, which were not used in the sacrifice itself, were for the support of the clergy. At the end of the eighth century this custom ceased, and the practice developed of giving a money donation to the priest outside the Mass, with which he could procure the materials for Mass and support himself. In return, the priest applied the special benefits of the Mass for the donor. This offering is called a stipend, intention or an alms.

The priest is justified in accepting a stipend for the celebration and application of a Mass because: (1) It has been a sanctioned custom of the Church since the eighth century. (2) Christ said, "For the laborer deserves his living" (Matthew 10:10); Saint Paul said, "They who serve the altar, have their share with the altar" (1 Corinthians 9:13). (3) Natural justice also requires the giving of stipends in return for the spiritual work of the priest. (4) The stipend is necessary in order to insure the proper and suitable celebration of the mystery. The priest must be supported, the Church cared for and the altar supplied with the necessities of the Mass.

The Church has many regulations in regard to Mass stipends, made in order to preserve the honor of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and to keep the suggestion of greed far from the holy altar of God. It must be firmly maintained that the Mass stipend is not the purchase price of a Mass: Masses cannot be bought. The priest is seriously obligated to celebrate Mass, properly and in due time, for the intention of the person giving the stipend.

Precepts on Assisting at Mass

Thus far we have considered the regulations of the Church as prescribed for the ministers of the sacrifice. From this point on we shall discuss the regulations for the faithful by which they too help keep everything connected with the sacrifice worthy and untarnished.

All Catholics who have reached the age of reason are obliged by a precept of the Church to hear Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation. This obligation does not hold under grave illness or a prohibitive distance from a church. Conditions vary. In the days before the automobile ten miles was a great distance, especially when we consider the poor roads of the time. But today ten miles is nothing, at least in places where there are trains, automobiles or buses on which to travel. It is a safe rule to say that a person in ordinarily good health would cease to be obliged to hear Mass if he had to walk four or five miles each way. Mothers of families must often miss Mass to attend to their growing children.

If you enter the church after Mass has started, but before the end of the Creed or the uncovering of the chalice, you have fulfilled your obligation of hearing Mass. However, if this lateness is due to your own fault, it is a venial sin.

One who comes in after the chalice has been uncovered, or who leaves before the priest's Communion, has missed Mass and must hear another in order to fulfill his religious obligation. The good Catholic comes early to prepare his heart and soul for the great event, and remains for a while after the final prayers to thank God for the privilege and the benefits of Holy Mass.

Church Etiquette

Our social life has a complicated etiquette designed to smooth the way of life and to give proper dignity where it is due. It is much more important that we observe the etiquette of God's House. God is the Final End and Object of creation. All creatures contribute toward His external glory. This is their duty. Every part of the irrational world — sun, moon, stars, minerals, fruits, animals — does the will of God.

Should we not then be ashamed if we were to neglect to contribute to God's glory? We are like the angels in having understanding and free will; therefore we are bound to add to the glory of God more perfectly and nobly than the rest of creation.

There are many practical ways by which we fulfill these obligations in reference to the Blessed Sacrament.

To show our faith in the Eucharistic Presence, we should tip our hats when we pass a church. Women might bow their heads.

During Mass, if we have occasion to come into the church, to leave or to pass the altar, we should genuflect on one knee. During the Consecration, all should kneel on both knees. Strictly speaking, there are only two times during a Low Mass when we should not be kneeling, and that is at the two Gospels, when we stand. If there is a sermon, we of course sit while it is being delivered. Custom, however, in some places has introduced the practice of sitting from the Offertory to the Sanctus.

Other rules which apply to our behavior at Communion and during the action of the Mass will be discussed in Unit III.

Conduct in Church

The angels tremble and veil their faces before God. The same God dwells in our tabernacle. We must show the greatest respect for the church which houses the spotless Lamb of God. We can do so by refraining from idle talk outside the doors, and certainly we should maintain the strictest silence within. All earthly talk must stop in the House of the Lord God.

We should bless ourselves with holy water when we enter and when we leave.

In attending Mass, we must maintain the strictest and most profound silence during the Consecration. The solemnity of this moment has often been the first call to the faith for non-Catholics who have attended our services. If we are coming into the church at the moment of Consecration, we should kneel down on both knees in the aisle and remain there until after the Consecration has been completed.

The sermon is the word of God Himself. No matter if the delivery be faulty, the sermon of an authorized priest is a divine gift. The strictest and most courteous attention should be given to it.

The rule of our Catholic life in word, thought and action should be to give glory to God. The angel choirs in heaven and the men of earth together sing: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!" All the rules which the Church has formulated in reference to the Mass help us to give that glory to God.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why has the Church issued rules governing the *celebration of the Mass?* What are rubrics?
2. Where may Mass be offered? Where was Mass celebrated in the primitive Church? in times of persecution? In what emergencies may Mass be said in places usually forbidden? What permission to say Mass is obtained from the Apostolic Delegate?
3. What three questions arise regarding the *time for celebrating Mass?*

   (1) What is the ruling of the Roman rite on Good Friday? Holy Thursday? Holy Saturday?

   (2) What reason did Pope Alexander II give for the general rule that a priest celebrate only one Mass daily? When may the priest say an additional Mass?

   (3) What permission was given on March 25, 1957, concerning the time of day when Mass may be celebrated?

   (4) Since March 25, 1957, how long must the faithful fast from solid food and alcoholic beverages before receiving Holy Communion? from non-alcoholic beverages? What special provision for the sick has been made?
5. Why do *Mass servers* attend the priest?
6. (1) What is the Mass? Why should we follow the English translation of the liturgy from the Missal?

   (2) How does the *use of Latin* add dignity to the Mass? Give other reasons for the use of Latin as the language of the Mass.

7. What were the Mass offerings of the people of the early Church? When were these offerings made? Why were offerings made? What three terms are applied to this offering? How is the priest justified in accepting a *Mass stipend?* How does Scripture support acceptance of a stipend? What are the church regulations in regard to acceptance of stipends?
8. What *precept of the Church* obliges Catholics to assist at Sunday Mass? What is a more important reason for assisting at Mass? Under what conditions is the obligation to assist at Sunday Mass removed? How do we fulfill the obligation of hearing Mass? Why should we be present for the beginning of Mass?
9. Why should we observe *church etiquette?* How do we observe church etiquette in the Eucharistic Presence? entering and leaving the church? at the Consecration?
10. What should govern our *conduct in church?* at the sermon of the Mass? Why has the Church formulated rules in reference to the Mass?

Religious Practices:

1. Observe with devotion the etiquette of the Church.
2. Let your conduct in church evidence your respect for the House of the Lord.

UNIT THREE:

Action of the Mass: Mass of the Catechumens

LESSON X

PRAYERS AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR

WE ARE now convinced that the Sacrifice of the Mass is the most holy and the most important action of our lives, and that it is one in which we should closely participate. We are ready to study the structure of the Mass, part by part, so that each time we offer sacrifice with the priest we may share in the deepest riches of this holy act.

Three practical suggestions are needful at this point: (1) Study each lesson with a Bible at hand, so that you may absorb each part of the Mass with a realization of its setting in, or relation to, the sacred word of God. (2) Study each lesson with the Daily Missal as your guide and commentator. (3) Review frequently the sequence of the parts of the Mass, so as not to lose sight of the whole Mass in concentrating on a single part.

In this section, it is important for us to keep in mind the general structure of the whole Mass, as well as the plan of the Mass of the Catechumens.

MASS OF THE CATECHUMENS

1. *Preparation*	2. *Instruction*
Holy Water	Epistle or other writings
Sign of the Cross	Gradual and Alleluia
Psalm, "Judica me"	Tract
Confiteor and Absolution	Sequence
Introit	Gospel
Kyrie	Sermon
Gloria	Creed
Collect	

Mass of the Faithful

3. *Offertory*

Offering of bread and wine

(Incensing of offerings and the faithful)

Washing of the hands

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

"Orate, fratres"

Secret

4. *Consecration (The Canon)*

Preface

Sanctus

Diptychs

Prayers preparing for the Consecration

Transubstantiation and Major Elevation

Offering of the Victim to God

Diptychs

End of Canon

5. *Communion*

Lord's Prayer

Fraction of the Host

"Agnus Dei"

Prayers preparing for the Communion

Receiving of Body and Blood of Christ

6. *Thanksgiving*

Prayers during the ablutions

Communion Antiphon

Postcommunion

"Ite Missa est"

Blessing

Last Gospel

Prayers at foot of Altar

Function of the Mass of the Catechumens

The Mass of the Catechumens is a preparation for the sacrifice which is offered during the Mass of the Faithful. It is also a time of instruction. The first half of this Mass comprises preparatory prayers and actions which take place mostly at the foot of the altar. They were intended to be sung or chanted together with the congregation, rather than privately. In this first part of the Mass of the Catechumens, *we speak to God,* and through acts of contrition we give expression to the "love which purifies itself."

The second half of the Mass of the Catechumens consists not of prayers, but of instructions. Our hearts have been purified by our prayers: we are now ready to receive the teachings of God and His Son. Thus, in the second part of the Mass of the Catechumens, *God speaks to us.*

Through *prayer* and *instruction,* therefore, the Mass of the Catechumens prepares us for the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, which takes place in the second division of the Mass, the Mass of the Faithful.

This lesson will discuss four of the preparatory prayers of the Mass of the Catechumens: (1) the Asperges, or sprinkling with holy water; (2) the Sign of the Cross; (3) the Psalm of David, Judica me; (4) the Public Confession, or Confiteor, and the Absolution.

Sprinkling with Holy Water

Water is a creature of God. It is, therefore, in the thought and love of God, and by the blessing of the Church it becomes an expression of the mystery of divine love. Because of the physical quality of cleansing which water possesses, the Church makes of it a means of grace to symbolize a spiritual cleansing. Holy water is a sacramental of the Church, the worthy use of which has the power to remit venial sins.

Usually the Asperges, or sprinkling with holy water by the priest, is given only on Sundays before the High Mass.

> "Thou shalt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed;
>
> "Thou shalt wash me and I shall be made whiter than snow."

This quotation from Psalm 50 is part of the prayer said by the priest when he sprinkles the holy water. The word "Asperges," which gives its title to this ceremony of sprinkling, or *aspersion,* is the first word of the Latin text of the psalm. "Hyssop" is a reference to a thickly tufted plant which the Jews used for scattering drops of water in the temple ceremony of purification.

We know, of course, that besides the aspersion of the Sunday High Mass, we have free access to the holy water in the font at the entrance to the church. It is a special means of purification, awaiting us at the very entrance of God's House. Its devout use in blessing ourselves is the first step in our preparation for the great mystery to be unrolled before our eyes.

The Sign of the Cross

We make the Sign of the Cross when we enter the church. The priest makes the Sign of the Cross when he reaches the foot of the altar. The server and the faithful should also sign themselves with the Cross, whose mystery they are about to share in the Holy Mass. This is the beginning of the divine liturgy, by which we affirm our faith at once in the Holy Trinity and the mystery of our redemption. No other action is repeated so often during the Mass as the Sign of the Cross; and rightly so, for: (1) The unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass is the same as the bloody Sacrifice of the Cross. (2) The Sign of the Cross is the sign of our Catholic belief in the chief mysteries of faith. (3) It is an action which makes us feel the divine charity of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Who created and Who preserves us; God the Son, Who died for our salvation; and God the Holy Ghost, that boundless Stream of divine love Which proceeds from Father and Son, and Which never ceases to sanctify, enlighten and strengthen us.

It is important for us to make the Sign of the Cross properly, devoutly and with deep recollection. The correct way is: (1) to place the left hand on the breast, (2) to touch with the right hand the forehead, then the breast, then the left and right shoulders, and (3) to say at the same time: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

This sign might be taken to symbolize that the Son proceeds from the Father (the forehead) and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son (the heart and two shoulders).

The Psalm of David ("Judica me" — Psalm 42)

After the Sign of the Cross the priest begins the song of David the Royal Psalmist, homesick for the Temple of God. Count the number of times the name of God is mentioned in the "Judica me." The singer begs God to deliver him from the wicked men among whom he is living. Despite his sorrow, he is not discouraged. He has faith that God will permit him to return to Jerusalem, where he will climb the holy hill to the tabernacle, there to go to the altar of sacrifice and sing, while he strikes the strings of his harp. Now in spirit he is with God and this union fills him with sacred joy.

As we have seen, the server answers the priest in our name. Why do we thus join with the priest, and respond to these verses? Because: (1) We too are exiles on this earth. (2) We lift our eyes to the altar, the holy hill, and long to approach God. (3) With the priest we will go up the altar to God, our one hope and our one salvation. This is expressed especially in the fourth verse of the Psalm:

> "And I will go in unto the altar of God;
> To God, Who giveth joy to my youth."

Before the inclusion of the "Judica me" in the Mass of the Catechumens, the early Christians used it as a joyful song after Baptism. On Easter Sunday the catechumens, clad in white garments and carrying candles, marched to Mass to receive Communion and take their part in the Mass of the Faithful for the first time. In this practice we can see the beautiful meaning of the words: "To God, Who giveth joy to my youth." But are we then to conclude that God does not give joy to us when we are old in years? Rather, Baptism and the life of grace make us young in soul, and we remain young as long as we are free from sin. The life of grace knows no growing old: it is a participation in the eternal life of God.

Formerly, the "Judica me" was said at the option of the priest before he entered the sanctuary. But the Council of Trent, in its revision of the Missal at the time of Pope Pius V, made its recital obligatory.

The fifth verse of the Psalm, "Why art thou sad, O my soul?", makes it proper to omit the "Judica me" (1) in all Masses for the dead and (2) during Passiontide, i. e., the two weeks before Easter. At these times mourning is proper, and we have no reason to chide our souls for being "sad."

The Minor Doxology and the Antiphon

As you will notice in your Missal, after the Psalm the following words occur:

> "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
> "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

This is a tribute of praise, or a *doxology*. We call it the Minor Doxology, because the Greater Doxology is the "Gloria in excelsis Deo," which we shall study in Lesson XII.

The Antiphon is a repetition of the verse: "I will go in unto the altar of God," after the Minor Doxology. It reminds the priest and the people of the holiness of the action they are about to perform. *Antiphon* means "answering voice," a kind of singing in use in the early centuries by which the introductory verse was repeated after each verse of the Psalm.

When they celebrate Mass, the Carthusians, Dominicans and Carmelites do not use the "Judica me." Recall why they are permitted to depart thus from the ordinary liturgy.

The Confiteor

In order to approach God worthily we must purify ourselves still more. To accomplish this the Church has instituted another sacramental in the preparatory part of the Mass. This is the Confiteor, an extremely important prayer of the Mass of the Catechumens. The Confiteor is a public confession, which is introduced by a psalm verse expressing great trust:

> "Our help is in the name of the Lord,
> "Who made heaven and earth."

With heads bowed in deep humility we accuse ourselves to God and before the court of heaven of our faults. We sorrow because we have offended God, Whom we love and Who loves us beyond all reckoning. This contrition gains pardon for our venial sins. Mortal sins, of course, must be absolved by the Sacrament of Penance.

Read the Confiteor in your Missal and find to whom besides God confession is made. We offend others besides God when we sin against His goodness. In the Mystical Body of Christ we never stand alone. The Mass, as we have seen, is an action in which the whole Church — those on earth, in purgatory and in heaven — draws close together. Therefore, the Confiteor is a public confession addressed to the Church in heaven and to the Church on earth. We, the faithful, confess together, and at the same time we ask for one another's help.

The second part of the Confiteor, after our sins have been acknowledged, is devoted to asking the Blessed Mother, the angels, the saints, our brethren and the priest to be our advocates before God.

The priest makes his confession first. It is a fortunate child who knows that his father and mother themselves do the good things which they tell the child to do. After the priest's confession the server makes one in the name of the congregation.

The celebrant bows deeply during the Confiteor. At that time we should excite in ourselves the deepest sentiments of humility. We strike the breast three times in sorrow when we say: "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault." These bodily actions help to fix in our minds the significance of what is being done at the altar, and they should therefore be made correctly and with the proper feeling.

Striking the breast in compunction was an ancient practice. The publican struck his breast when he entered the Temple to pray. Holy Scripture says of the people who witnessed the Crucifixion that they "began to return beating their breasts" (Luke 23:48). It was a common practice in the early Church. Saint Gregory Nazianzen says: "In sackcloth and ashes, and day and night, at the steps of the altar we strike our breasts."

The present wording of the Confiteor is not very old, but all scholars agree that its main outline is of Apostolic origin. Public confession as part of the Mass was introduced in the eighth century; but some form of confession had been in use since the early Church.

Without the permission of the Holy See nothing can be added to the Confiteor. Several religious orders, such as the Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians, have been given the privilege of adding (for their own recitation) the names of their founders to the list of saints after those of Saints Peter and Paul.

The Absolution

After this confession of our faults, the priest prays an absolution over us. This absolution of the Confiteor is not like the one given in the confessional. It is a petition asking God to forgive sin. The absolution which is part of the Sacrament of Penance takes away sin.

In humility and charity the priest says:

> "May Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you your sins and bring you to life everlasting."

The server in the name of the congregation answers, "Amen," which is the Hebrew word for "May it be so!" With gentle confidence in God's mercy, the celebrant then makes the Sign of the Cross and says:

> "May the Almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon, absolution and remission of our sins."

To which again the congregation, through the server, answers, "Amen."

It is important to note the meanings of the three words "pardon," "absolution" and "remission." "Pardon" means forgiveness of sin; "absolution" means removal of guilt; "remission" means the cancelling of the punishment due to sin.

The Priest Ascends the Altar

Now the priest rises from his humble position and recites in rapid dialogue two verses from Psalms 84 and 101 beginning:

> "Thou wilt turn, O God, and bring us to life."

The server answers appropriately:

> "And Thy people shall rejoice in Thee."

Once humbled by sin, strengthened now by sorrow and divine forgiveness, the priest at last has the courage to go up to the altar reciting words of love. Before he begins the ascent, he says to the people:

> "The Lord be with you."

They answer him:

> "And with thy spirit."

In these words he establishes contact with them and through him they unite with Christ, the unseen Priest, in the Divine Mystery of the Mass.

"The Holy of Holies"

As the priest approaches the table of sacrifice he prays again that he and the people may be purified:

> "Take away from us our iniquities, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we may be worthy to enter with pure minds into the Holy of Holies. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

The reference to the "Holy of Holies" is full of meaning. It alludes to the part of the Temple of Solomon which only the highpriest could enter, and he only on the great day of Atonement. There the Ark of the Covenant, over which shone the luminous cloud which was a visible manifestation of the presence of Jahweh, was kept. Even the light of day was excluded from this sheltered place. A thick veil shut the Holy of Holies from everyone's eyes. The highpriest spent days in prayer and purification before he entered. By making reference to that sacred place, so bound up with atonement, the Church points out that what the sacrifice of the Old Law prefigured, our daily Mass realizes.

When we ask God to take away our iniquities, we ask Him to remove the veil: for our sins are like a veil which keeps us from seeing Him as He is, excluding us from the true Holy of Holies where lives the Son of God, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why should we study the Mass with a Bible at hand? a Missal? Why review the sequence of the parts of the Mass?
2. In the *Mass of the Catechumens,* how do we prepare for the Sacrifice? How are we instructed? What occurs during the Offertory of the Mass? the Consecration? the Communion? the Thanksgiving?
3. What is the *function of the Mass of the Catechumens?* Where do the prayers take place? What do we do in the first part of the Mass of the Catechumens? in the second part? How does it prepare us for the Mass of the Faithful?
4. Why is *holy water* used in the Church? What is the Asperges? What is the prayer at the Asperges? Why is holy water kept at the entrance of the church?
5. What is the beginning of the divine liturgy? What do we affirm in making the *Sign of the Cross?* Why is the Sign of

the Cross repeated so often during Mass? Why should we make the Sign of the Cross properly? What is the correct way to make it?

6. What do we ask of God in the *Psalm of David?* Why do we join in this Psalm, through the server? How was this Psalm used by the early Christians? What does Baptism do for the soul? When is this Psalm omitted in the Mass? Why?
7. What prayer of the Mass follows the Psalm? Why is it said?
8. What is the *Confiteor?* How is it introduced in the Mass? Why is it said? What should be our bodily actions during the Confiteor of the Mass? What is the origin of the Confiteor?
9. Why does the priest say the *absolution* prayer? What does it ask of God? What is the meaning of "Amen"? of "pardon"? of "absolution"? of "remission"?
10. From what Psalms are the prayers that follow the Confiteor derived? What prayers are next said? What contact is established through these prayers?
11. What prayer refers to the *Holy of Holies?* To what does this prayer allude? What does this reference point out?

Religious Practices:

1. In making the Sign of the Cross, reflect upon the divine love of the Holy Trinity.
2. Explain the meaning of the Mass to a non-Catholic and invite him to attend Mass.

Unit Three

LESSON XI

THE INTROIT AND THE KYRIE

THE priest is now at the altar, where he first meets the holy relics of the saints. He is still filled with contrition; he wishes to be assured that when he approaches the altar, he and the faithful are completely forgiven and in the friendship of God. He says:

> "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins. Amen."

During this prayer the celebrant bends over and kisses the altar-stone, where the relics of the saints are entombed. This action recalls the days when Mass was celebrated in the catacombs over the tombs of the martyred dead. It likewise reminds us of the unity of the Church. The members of Christ are one, whether already triumphant with Him in heaven, or still part of the Church Militant here below. It is finally a mark of profound respect for Christ, Whom these martyrs imitated by their death.

In ancient days, instead of kissing the altar, the celebrant kissed a cross which was painted on the Missal. A vestige of this practice is found in the Pontifical Mass when the bishop kisses the altar first, and then the pages of the Gospel of the day, which is presented to him by a subdeacon. In some rites it was customary to kiss the Sign of the Cross traced on the altar with a finger. The Dominicans still do this.

The kiss is a symbol of love and submission, and it is used liturgically to honor God as our Father and Creator. With the priest at this moment, we should give our hearts wholly to God and let Him shape them according to His divine pattern. The Mass at this point teaches a lesson in charity and love, for it proposes to us that we yield all our affections to the love of Christ. When His love possesses our spirit, our hearts will be rightly disposed toward our fellow-men and we can say with all charity and truthfulness: "The Lord be with you."

To summarize, we might say that the kissing of various objects employed in the Mass is an expression of that deep unity and charity which circulates between Christ and His Church, and between the various members of the Church.

Incense

In a Solemn High Mass the priest, after kissing the altar, blesses the incense and then incenses the altar and the crucifix. In the Jewish religion, the incense offering was a service made morning and night every day on a special altar. Incense was accepted and burned as an additional gift on the Feast of Reconciliation. The Fathers teach that the Wise Men brought incense to Bethlehem, thus to symbolize their adoration of the Child as God "concealed and revealed under the garb of earthly lowliness." Because the pagans used incense in their idolatrous worship, the early Church for a long time did not include it in her liturgy. It was, however, in general used for preparing bodies for burial, and this finally led to its being employed in honoring the saints. As the martyrs were carried to the burial place, pots of incense were burned on pedestals along the way. In memory of this custom, grains of incense are placed with the relics in the altar-stone. From that introduction into Christian liturgy, incense has obtained a wider use in the services of the Church.

Incense is often thought of as a symbol of prayer. Like prayer, it rises in fragrance to the feet of God. Refer to the prayer recited at the incensing of the altar during the Offertory, and you will see how the liturgy compares the incense to prayer.

The Introit

What it is: The Introit is a short prayer which is like a key unlocking the particular sentiment or meaning of the feast or season being celebrated. Changing with the feast or season, it is the first variable or Proper part of the Mass, and may be found in either the Proper of the Season, the Proper of the Saints or the Common of the Saints. The note which the Introit expresses is struck again and again in the Mass, especially in the Gradual, the Offertory and the Communion.

The word "introit" comes from the Latin *introitus* and means "the entry." The Introit originally was a song which was chanted as the celebrant and his assistants entered the church. In the early Church the High, or sung, Mass was the rule, the Low Mass the exception, being permitted only at times when circumstances made the sung Mass difficult to celebrate. The Introit should properly be sung; it loses some of its effect in a Low Mass. Formerly the choir sang it as the celebrant and his assistants came in in procession, preceded by candle-bearing acolytes and the censer-bearer. This dramatic entrance, it can readily be seen, defines and enhances the real purpose of the Introit.

Actions: As the priest reads the Introit from the Missal, which is on the Epistle side of the altar, his hands are prayerfully joined before his breast. At the first words of the prayer he signs himself with the cross — except at a Requiem Mass, when he makes the sign over the Missal toward the ground, as if to bless the deceased for whom we especially pray at such a Mass.

When it is omitted: In the Mass of the Easter Vigil, the celebrant is in the sanctuary as Mass begins, having already conducted lengthy services there. Since he makes no entrance at this point, there is no Introit.

Source and spirit: What we call regular Introits are taken entirely from the Psalms. The irregular Introits have some part taken from another source. The Introit for the third Mass of Christmas morning, for example, is partly from Isaias; that for Epiphany partly from Malachias. Some irregular Introits even have parts which are the work of the fifth-century Christian poet

Sedulius — for instance, the "Salve, sancta parens" of the Mass of Our Lady's Nativity. Look up this Introit, and those for Epiphany and the third Mass of Christmas. Study the Bible setting of the last two mentioned.

We have, then, three general sources of the Introit: (1) the Psalms, (2) other parts of Sacred Scripture, (3) writings of poets of the Church, like Sedulius. This gives a wide field from which to choose the various Introits needed to provide appropriate expression of the varying spirit of the Masses of the liturgical year. Thus, for example, on Easter Sunday, when the earth exults in the joy of the glorious Resurrection of our Divine Lord, the Introit seems to sweep us along with the thrill of the feast. Refer to this Introit in the Mass for Easter Sunday, and study the appropriateness of its every part.

In time of sorrow the Introit is usually selected from the elegiac Psalms. Such, for example, is the Introit for Septuagesima Sunday, when the Church puts on the violet garments of penitence and tells her children to fast and do penance in preparation for the sorrowful tragedy which is to take place during the last week of Lent.

The Introit on the feast of a saint is chosen to bring out some highlight in the saint's career. For example, that of the Mass on the feast of Saint Jerome Aemilian expresses his well-known compassion for unfortunate children.

Find in your Missal all the Introits mentioned in the last three paragraphs.

Structure: Today the Introit is much shorter than formerly. It usually consists of the following parts: (1) an antiphon, (2) one verse, usually from a psalm, (3) the Minor Doxology, (4) repetition of the antiphon.

Thus the Introit greets us at the entrance of the Mass. It is like a triumphal arch at the head of a Roman road, or like a porch through which we approach the mystery.

The Kyrie

What it is: The Kyrie is a series of nine supplications, arranged so that three repetitions are addressed to each Person of the Blessed Trinity. Three times "Kyrie eleison" is said, three times "Christe eleison," again three times "Kyrie eleison." These are Greek expressions meaning "Lord, have mercy on us," "Christ, have mercy on us," "Lord, have mercy on us." There are other threefold arrangements in the Mass: the Sanctus, the Agnus Dei and the "Domine, non sum dignus." Find them in the Ordinary.

In early days, the Kyrie was known as the Minor Litany, having been part of a longer litany which was sung as the faithful went in procession from the Station Church (this term will be explained later) to the church where the Pope was to say Mass. The Kyrie is now part of the Ordinary of the Mass, and is never omitted.

Proof for the early use of the Kyrie in some form is found in the records of the second Council of Vaison, held in 529 A. D., which say in part: "Let that beautiful custom of all the provinces of the East and of Italy be kept up — viz., that of singing with grand effect and compunction the 'Kyrie eleison' at Mass, Matins and Vespers — because so sweet and pleasing a chant, even though continued day and night without interruption, could never produce disgust or weariness."

Before the Introit was established in the Mass, the Roman liturgy contained an introductory litany, which is still used on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost. The Byzantine liturgies have also preserved it.

Actions: After the Introit the celebrant goes to the middle of the altar and there recites the Kyrie alternately with the server. At a Solemn High Mass it is recited at the Missal while the choir sings it.

Parallels: This cry for mercy has its inspiration, if not its direct source, in Sacred Scripture. In Psalm 40 we read: "O Lord, be Thou merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee." In chapter 9 of Saint Matthew the blind men follow Jesus crying out the while: "Have pity on us, Son of David!" The blind men who sat by the road as Christ walked by also cried out: "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" (Matthew

20:30). These Scriptural appeals to our Lord have probably had a great influence in introducing the Kyrie into the Mass.

Purpose: The Kyrie has several related purposes. It follows the Introit, which has expressed the special feeling of the Mass for the day. This expression of joy, praise, sorrow or whatever it may be, reminds us again of our own unworthiness, causing our hearts to cry out for mercy, since God's mercy alone can make us worthy of celebrating the mysteries and the feasts of the saints.

The Kyrie is also a preface to the Gloria and the Collects. Cardinal Wiseman said: "The 'Kyrie eleison' — that cry for mercy which is to be found in every liturgy of East and West — seems introduced as if to give grander effect to the outburst of joy and praise which succeeds it in the 'Gloria in excelsis'; it is a deepening of our humiliation, that our triumph may be the better felt."

Greek origin: Of great significance is the fact that the Kyrie is from the Greek. From the Hebrew we have such words in the Mass as "amen," "alleluia," "hosanna," "Sabaoth," "cherubim" and "seraphim." Thus in the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar we have united the three languages which made up the title placed on the Cross of the bloody Sacrifice: Latin, Greek, Hebrew.

Eight steps of the preparatory prayer service of the Mass of the Catechumens have now been discussed: (1) the sprinkling with holy water, (2) the Sign of the Cross, (3) the Psalm "Judica me," (4) public confession, or the Confiteor, (5) the kissing of the altar by the priest, (6) the incensing of the altar, (7) the Introit, (8) the Kyrie.

Discussion Aids:

1. What prayer does the priest say in approaching the altar? Why does he say this prayer? Why does he kiss the altar? What article was kissed in ancient days? Where do we find a vestige of this practice? Of what is the kiss a symbol? How should we join with the priest as he approaches the altar?
2. Why was *incense* offered in the Jewish religion? by the Wise Men? the early Church? How is incense likened to a prayer?

3. What is the *Introit?* Why does it change with the feast or the season? What does "introit" mean? What was the Introit originally? What are the actions of the priest as he reads the Introit? When is the Introit omitted in the Mass? What is the source of regular Introits? irregular Introits? Give the three general sources. What is the structure of the Introit?
4. What is the Kyrie? What other threefold arrangements are in the Mass? What proof have we of early use of the Kyrie? What are the actions of the priest after the Introit? What are the parallels in Sacred Scripture to this cry for mercy in Psalm 40? Matthew 9 and 20? What is the purpose of the Kyrie? Of what does the Kyrie convince us? Why is it significant that the Kyrie is of Greek origin? What three tongues are united in the Sacrifice of the Altar? What words are from the Hebrew?
5. How many preparation prayers have now been discussed? Review the Discussion Aids of Lessons IX and X.

Religious Practices:

1. In assisting at Mass, find in the Introit the keynote expressed. Look for it in the Gradual, Offertory and Communion.
2. Look for the prayers of the Mass which are quoted from the Bible.

LESSON XII

THE GLORIA AND THE COLLECT

IMMEDIATELY following the Kyrie comes the Gloria. It is an upward-beating prayer that reaches a peak of praise which human words are scarcely ever able to equal:

> "We praise Thee,
> "We bless Thee,
> "We adore Thee,
> "We glorify Thee.
> "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."

What the Gloria is: Often called the Major Doxology, as we have seen, to distinguish it from the "Gloria Patri" or Minor Doxology, this hymn of praise begins with the words of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14). For this reason it is sometimes called the "angelic hymn." Though it contains pleas for mercy, it is primarily a hymn of praise of the Blessed Trinity. Its position immediately after the Kyrie is, therefore, most suitable. The Kyrie is a petition for mercy; the Gloria is a thanksgiving for it.

When it is said: The Gloria is a song of joy and radiant festivity. Therefore its recital is forbidden during all seasons of penance and mourning, such as Lent, and also in Masses of the dead and certain other Votive Masses. Whenever black or violet vestments are worn, the Gloria will not be said. It is, however, said in every Mass outside those times.

Actions: When the Gloria is said, the priest intones it standing erect before the center of the altar, his hands joined. At "Gloria in excelsis," without lifting his eyes, he extends and raises his hands to his shoulders to show his eagerness to magnify God. At "Deo" he again joins his hands and bows profoundly to the crucifix. This bow is repeated several times.

Source: Before the entire hymn, as it stands today, was composed, the angelic words themselves used to be sung at the midnight Mass on Christmas. From this grew the developed form we now possess. We know that the Gloria has existed since the fourth century, for it is found almost entirely in its present form in the Apostolic Constitutions, which are a valuable source-book of the beliefs, observances and liturgical practices prevailing at that general period. At first the Church confined its general use in the Mass to bishops, who said it on Sundays and festivals, while ordinary priests said it only on Easter Sunday. Not until the eleventh century were all restrictions taken away, and the Gloria regularly recited by all priests.

Structure: The hymn is divided into an introduction and a main part. The introduction is the angels' song, while the main part refers to and exalts the three Persons of the Adorable Trinity. Read the introductory lines of the Gloria, then the lines directed to God the Father, the lines petitioning Jesus Christ, and finally the lines addressed to the Holy Ghost.

Three themes seem to be woven into the Gloria — the praise of God, the consequent peace to men, and the connecting reality between these, our redemption by our Lord.

"Glory": The Old Testament is filled with commands to glorify God. The Jew's conception of God's magnificence was colored by what he knew of the magnificence of the kings of earth. He conceived of God, as remote, awesome; His throne, burning with fine gold and flashing with sparkling jewels, bathed in clouds of rare incense rising from rich censers around His feet. The heavens were His seat, and the earth His footstool. Before such majesty, it was meet to bow in abjection and fear. "Glory," as the Jew meant it, was the praise of a weak and awed subject before the infinitely august Creator.

In the West, where the ideas of Rome prevailed, the greatest person was the emperor. When the Romans embraced Christianity, they saw Christ as the victorious King, triumphant over His enemies, a Conqueror Who had created a kingdom of the saved. In the West the word "glory" was a jubilant shout, given in the manner in which the Roman senators hailed the entrance of their emperor.

Both conceptions fuse in the praise of the Gloria, though here of course they are wholly elevated and spiritualized. The Eastern element reveals itself in a line such as: "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory," by which we thank God for being God. To thank God because He is what He is is to know that He is great, beautiful and glorious above all else, and that He does not need anything to add to His happiness. But the Roman note rings out triumphantly in an expression such as this: "For Thou only art holy; Thou only art Lord; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high."

"Peace": The Gloria is pervaded with the holy message of "on earth peace among men of good will." This phrase, chanted first on Christmas night, told us what we had gained from the Incarnation; chanted now in the Mass, it tells us what we gain from giving glory to God. This peace is not to be understood in any mere external, political sense, though that too is undoubtedly one of the results of the peace of Christ. But here "peace" means grace, friendship with God, a sharing in God's life. For Christ Himself is Peace (Micheas 5:5). He brought peace to the whole human race because He reconciled man with God. He bridged the gap which separated us from the Father. By sin we had forfeited our right to peace. Now peace and reconciliation with God proceed from the Child in the stable.

Besides the peace that comes through Christ to mankind in general, there is the peace that He brings to each individual soul. His grace gives every human being the strength to live his life in conformity with God's divine will. To follow that grace means the cessation of strife in the soul, and that is indeed peace such as the world cannot give.

"Lamb of God": From our study of the Jewish sacrifices, we see the appropriateness of calling our Lord the Lamb of God in

this great hymn of praise. Because He has atoned for our sins, are we now able to chant a worthy hymn of praise to God. The realization of what redemption has effected for us has made the Christian consciousness delight in thinking of our Saviour as the Lamb of God. The Immaculate Lamb is carved on old burial monuments, painted and carved in wood, embroidered on tapestries, used as the motive in illuminating manuscripts, staining glass and fashioning mosaics and tiles. One famous painting shows the Lamb of God on a throne with men and angels before Him in adoration.

The Gloria, moving swiftly on, shows us the Lamb of God in the glory He has merited at the right hand of the Father. He has conquered. He is now the Victor. He is no longer the suffering Lamb of Good Friday. He is the triumphant Lamb of the eternal Easter. As we chant the words, "Who sittest at the right hand of the Father," our souls should go out in loving longing to the thought of our own resurrection, when we will be with Him in heaven as we are now with Him in His Church.

At this glorious part of the Mass we enter the perfect world, a world where there is no longer hunger for satisfaction of self, but hunger only for the glory of God in the highest, and for peace among men. If we could deeply feel and sincerely embody in our lives the words we sing during the Gloria, it would be Christmas in every heart every day, and a tranquil but a mighty victory would be won for all eternity.

"Dominus vobiscum" — "The Lord be with you"

After the Gloria, the celebrant kisses the altar, turns slowly to the people, extends and then folds his hands again, saying, "Dominus vobiscum." This ancient greeting occurs eight times during Mass. Each time it is said you are reminded to take an active part in the celebration of Holy Mass.

These words of greeting are very old. When Booz came out of Bethlehem into his fields, he said to the reapers: "The LORD be with you!" and they answered him: "The LORD bless you" (Ruth 2:4). The Jews were very particular that God's name, or at least some reference to His gifts, should be in all their greetings. Some of these greetings were: "The blessings of Jahweh upon thee," "May God be with thee," "Be thou blessed of Jahweh," "Peace be to thee." This last was the greeting the Saviour made use of to salute His Apostles after the Resurrection.

The "Dominus vobiscum" confers grace upon us if we are properly disposed. When we reply through the altar-boy, "Et cum spiritu tuo" ("And with thy spirit"), we are wishing the priest in return the same blessing that he has invoked upon us — that God may be with him. This cry also reminds us that the gifts of the altar are not human offerings, but that the grace of the Holy Spirit is present, and *descending* on *all,* accomplishes the Sacrifice. We see indeed a man (the priest), but it is God Who acts through him. "Nothing human takes place at this holy altar." When a bishop celebrates a Mass in which the Gloria is recited, he says "Pax vobis" ("Peace be to you") instead of "Dominus vobiscum." These words carry on the spirit of the Gloria, and remind us of the time when only a bishop was permitted to recite the Gloria.

"Oremus" — "Let us pray"

The celebrant now returns to the Missal and says or sings, "Oremus" ("Let us pray"). In the Greek liturgy the deacon warns the people thus: "Let us stand well; in peace let us pray to the Lord," or "Let us pray to the Lord." That simple "Oremus" is the survival of a long exhortation to prayer which is still used in the intercessory prayers of Good Friday. On Good Friday and ember days, the deacon tells the people to kneel: "Flectamus genua." In the early Church, the assembly then prayed privately and in silence, until the "Levate" or "Rise up" was sung; then the priest once more raised his voice in supplication, to sum up, as it were, the prayers of the faithful.

The Collect

What it is: The Collect, simply called "Oration" in the Missal, is the principal prayer of the Mass of the Catechumens.

It is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ, addressed to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

Action: The Collect, like certain other prayers of petition in the Mass, is said with outstretched, uplifted arms. This attitude is so natural for prayer that we find it even among pagans. Virgil ascribes these words to his hero Aeneas: "Anchises, my father, thou all-joyous one, raise thy eyes to the stars and stretch forth thy hands and cry out: 'Jupiter, thou all-powerful, if prayers avail with thee, deign to cast a glance upon us.' "

Moses prayed thus in the wilderness, and Scripture tells us that as long as he kept his hands lifted on high, his people were victorious in the battle with the Amalecites, but when he let them down, the victory fell to the enemy (Exodus 17). Saint Paul said: "I wish, then, that the men pray . . . lifting up pure hands" (1 Timothy 2:8). Pictures in the catacombs show us that the early Christians prayed in this attitude. Except for some Orders of religious who extend their hands in the form of a cross, only the priest prays with outstretched arms today. The faithful pray with hands folded.

Structure: The Collect is the perfect prayer. Collects are very short — at first sight they may seem even meagre; but they will be found to be concise expressions of deepest thought.

Their brevity and forthrightness may be traced to their Roman origin. The Romans were lawmakers and practical men. They lacked the poetic nature of the Greeks. Whatever they did or said was unadorned and to the point. Hence every word of the Collects is a necessary word. Compositions of this type are often called "lapidary," a term derived from the cutting of precious stones, in which art the greatest exactitude must necessarily be practised.

We could not add or subtract a single word without ruining the entire prayer. For example: shelves of books have been written on the points that everything good comes from Almighty God; that God helps us to know what is good; that in order to act on what we know as good, we need the guidance of God. Now read the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter and notice how perfectly and succinctly it expresses these mighty thoughts.

The Collects of the Roman liturgy have three characteristics:

1. They are corporate prayers, or prayers said in common. Such prayer has great power with God. Our Blessed Saviour recommends it and promises a great privilege to those who practise it, as recorded in Matthew 18:19, 20.

2. The prayer of the Collect is directed to God the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Himself always addressed His prayers to His Father in heaven (refer to Matthew 11:25; John 11:41; 17:1; Luke 10:21). He thus taught the Apostles how to pray: "In this manner . . . shall you pray: 'Our Father . . . ' " (Matthew 6:9). Likewise, He directed us to address our prayers to God *through* Him (refer to John 16:23; 14:6). Some few Collects are addressed to Christ. No Collect is addressed directly to the Holy Ghost, because it is the Holy Ghost Himself Who gives the Church the prayer to say, as He is the soul of the Church.

3. The Collects have a special structure which consists of (a) the *appeal,* which is directed to God with a reference to the feast of the day, the saint commemorated or the attribute of God being honored; (b) the *petition* appropriately connected with the appeal; and (c) the *conclusion:* "through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end," mentioning all Persons of the Blessed Trinity. This conclusion is slightly changed when the Son or Holy Ghost is mentioned in the body of the Collect, or when Christ is addressed directly.

A few examples will indicate these three elements usually to be found in all Collects:

From the Mass in honor of Saint Stephen, December 26:

> "Grant us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, so to imitate what we revere, that we may learn to love even our

> enemies: for we celebrate the day of his birth to immortality, who on behalf of his persecutors knew how to plead with Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Who with Thee liveth and reigneth in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

The *appeal* here invokes or addresses God with a reference to Saint Stephen, whose feast is being celebrated. The *petition* is that we may be able to imitate Saint Stephen, whom we reverence, and like him, may learn to love our enemies. The *conclusion* varies from the usual form because, as noted, the Collect mentions Christ; therefore, instead of the usual "Through our Lord Jesus Christ," etc., the conclusion is, "Who with Thee ... in the unity of the Holy Ghost," etc.

The Collect from the Mass of Corpus Christi is a particularly beautiful example of this form of prayer. (As will be recognized, the Church also makes use of this Collect in the rite of Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament):

> "O God, Who in this wonderful sacrament hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the sacred mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within us the fruit of Thy redemption. Who livest and reignest together with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

The *appeal* of this Collect is addressed to Christ under the title of God, and clearly refers to the mystery of the Eucharist, which is commemorated on the feast of Corpus Christi. The *petition* is a request that our devotion to the Eucharist may be such as to bring us great spiritual fruit. Since this Collect is addressed to Christ, the *conclusion* takes the form: "Who livest and reignest together with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

Collect from Second Mass, at Dawn, for Christmas:

> "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that we, upon whom is poured the new light of Thy Word made flesh, may show forth in our actions that which by faith shineth in our minds. Through the same Lord

> Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen."

The *appeal* is addressed to God, and it refers to His attribute of omnipotence, and to the Feast of Christmas ("Thy Word made flesh"). The *petition* is that we may act in accordance with what we believe. The *conclusion* again varies slightly because there is a reference to the Son in the body of the prayer.

Source, Name and Number of Collects

Source: Many of the Collects are very ancient prayers. In the early Church they were at first improvised, and later the most eloquent and theologically important ones were written down. In this way several collections of rare and beautiful prayers were made from at least the sixth century on.

Name: The name has been explained in several ways. However, the most likely explanation is that it came from the practice of Stational Masses. A certain church in Rome was appointed for the more important feasts and to this Station Church (from the Latin word *stare,* "to stand") the faithful of Rome marched in procession, and stood while Mass was said by the Pope or his representative. The Latin term for gathering is *collecta,* and the short prayer said at the Mass was called the *oratio super collectam.* These processions take place today, but usually without the presence of the Holy Father and with much less solemnity.

Number of Collects: Masses on the more important feasts usually have but one Collect. Certain other days of lesser rank may have more than one Collect. In order to keep the Mass from becoming too long, the limit has been set at three.

The bishop of your diocese may choose a Collect which he wishes said in certain Masses for special intentions, such as for the Pope, the Church, peace, good weather, etc. This is known as an *oratio imperata,* or "ordered prayer." The Pope may order such a prayer for the whole Church, while the bishop may order it only for his own diocese.

Discussion Aids:

1. What is the Gloria? With what words does it begin? Whom does it praise? When is it said? When omitted? What are the actions of the priest when intoning the Gloria?
2. What is the source of the Gloria? the development? the structure? What are the three themes of the Gloria? What was the basis of the Jews' concept of God's magnificence? of God's glory? What was the Romans' concept of glory? How do the two concepts fuse in the Gloria?
3. How is the Gloria pervaded with peace? What is the nature of this peace? What peace comes through Christ to mankind? to the individual?
4. Why is Christ appropriately called the Lamb of God? Why should we endeavor to embody in our lives the spirit of the Gloria?
5. How often does the *"Dominus vobiscum"* occur in the Mass? Of what should this greeting remind us? How old are these words of greeting? Why should we be properly disposed to receive this greeting? Of what should this greeting remind us as to the gifts of the altar? What does the greeting "Pax vobis" recall?
6. What does *"Oremus"* mean? How is this address made in the Greek liturgy? in the Roman liturgy on Good Friday?
7. What is the *Collect?* What is the action of the priest at the Collect? Why? How did Moses pray in the wilderness? How does Saint Paul say man should pray?
8. What is the structure of the Collect? To what may its origin be traced? Why are the Collects corporate prayers? To whom are the prayers of the Collect directed? Why? What is the "appeal" of the Collect? the "petition"? the "conclusion"? Give separately the three parts of the Collect from the Mass in honor of Saint Stephen. State the purpose of each part. What is the "appeal," "petition" and "conclusion" of the Collect for the Mass of Corpus Christi? the Second Mass, at Dawn, for Christmas?
9. What is the *source* of the Collects? Why are they *called* Collects? Why does the *number* of Collects said at one Mass vary? What is an "ordered prayer"?

carry out the instructions which it gives. The hands in this position symbolize labor.

At High Mass the Epistle is chanted by the subdeacon, who faces the altar. He chants in a loud tone of voice, which he modulates at the conclusion. The people sit during the Epistle, which is an ancient custom derived from the Synagogue and the early Church.

The word "epistle" means simply "a letter." This part of the Mass is called the Epistle because it usually consists of a portion of some letter written by an Apostle to an assembly of converts. Most of these letters were written by Saint Paul. Saint Paul could not visit all the churches he had established as frequently as he wished. In order, therefore, to keep in touch with them he would write his instructions in a letter and send it by messenger to the bishop of the church. In his Epistle to the Colossians (4:16) he writes: "And when this letter has been read among you, see that it be read in the church of the Laodiceans also." At the end of his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says: "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read to all the holy brethren" (5:27). After the opening prayers of the Mass, the bishop would announce that he had a letter from Saint Paul, and would then proceed to read it aloud. The more important letters were read over and over again. The Apostles Peter, James, John and Jude also wrote such letters, but Saint Paul's were the most numerous.

Sometimes this reading is taken from the Books of Scripture which are not properly Epistles. The Missal, therefore, calls this part of the Mass "lessons" (from the Latin *lectio,* "a reading"); but popularly we speak of it as an Epistle. Some Masses have more than two lessons, a few have three, and some have as many as seven. Any Mass with more than two is usually very old in origin. Study the three lessons on Good Friday, the first of which is spoken, the second sung very simply, and the third sung solemnly by three chanters. Notice the source of each lesson.

The title of the Book of Scripture from which the lesson is taken is read before the text itself; for example, the reading of

Unit Three

Lesson XIII

THE EPISTLE AND THE INTERMEDIARY CHANTS

UP TO this point the principal note of the Mass of the Catechumens has been petition and praise. In the Confiteor, the Kyrie and the Psalms we have begged to have our sins forgiven; we have constantly, in the Gloria particularly, by word and action paid our tribute of praise to the Blessed Trinity; in the Collect we present a petition for some special grace. We have up to this point been speaking to God.

God now speaks to us in the inspired words of the Epistle and the Gospel, in the explanatory sermon and the Creed.

The Epistle

We have already mentioned in these lessons the services of the Jewish Sabbath, which were opened by readings from Moses and the Prophets. The first Christians in their Sunday reunions did the same thing, adding to the readings from the Old Law readings from the New. In the intervening centuries the reading of the Prophets (except on some few specified occasions) has gradually been abandoned. At present the Mass usually has two lessons from the Bible, which are said or sung: the Epistle and the Gospel. We will consider the first in this lesson.

After the Collect the celebrant remains at the Missal. At the Collect, his hands were outspread in an attitude of prayer, but he now rests them on the Missal-stand, while he reads the Epistle in a voice which can be heard by the people. The position of the hands has a mystical meaning: it reminds the priest that he must not only read the law, but also do what it commands, and

Religious Practices:

1. Relate the meaning of the prayers of the Mass to your daily living.
2. Recall at each "Dominus vobiscum" that you are reminded to take an active part in the celebration of Holy Mass.

"the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," "Lessons from Isaias, the Prophet," etc. If the reading of this lesson is from Wisdom, Proverbs, the Canticle of Canticles, Ecclesiastes or Ecclesiasticus, its title is always "the reading from the Book of Wisdom."

Conformity to the Liturgical Year

In the early Church the whole of Scripture was read from beginning to end over the period of the liturgical year. The bishop would signify to the reader to stop by saying "Deo gratias," and at the next Mass the reader would continue where he had left off.

But a later arrangement was made in conformity to the feast of the season or of the saint. The Epistles for Christmas, Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, the seasons of Lent and Advent, for example, were suited to the particular meaning and practice of each. Outside of such principal seasons, an effort was made to have all the parts of the Bible read continuously; this can still be traced in the lessons contained in the Proper of the Season. For the Mass in honor of a saint passages were taken from both the Old and New Testaments which emphasized the virtues practised by the particular saint.

The Reader

For centuries the public reading of the Epistles was the special privilege of the minor cleric known as the lector. Even today, before a priest is ordained he must first receive minor orders, one of which is lector. By that order he receives official permission to read the lessons during Mass. About the ninth century the duty of reading these lessons had been universally taken over by the subdeacon, a cleric of higher rank than the lector, but holding the lector's order also.

At Solemn High Mass in the early Church the Epistle was chanted from an elevated pulpit which was called the "ambo." As the Solemn High Mass was then the rule, the ambo was used very often.

At the end of the Epistle the server answers "Deo gratias," as evidence of the gratitude we owe to God for the spiritual nourishment afforded by His sacred words. In ancient times this expression was in everyday use among the faithful. It was a principal form of salutation. In times of persecution it was often the password by which the Christians were admitted to the secret meeting places of the faithful.

Our hearts should overflow when we say these words during Mass. Our instruction has been divine and it has been given to us in letters from heaven through the lips of God's chosen messengers. Every word has been supernatural and heavenly food for our hungering souls. Holy Scripture, in the words of Saint Paul to Timothy, "is . . . useful for teaching, for reproving, for correcting, for instructing in justice; that the man of God may be perfect, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Relation of the Epistle to the Gospel

The Epistle gives the inspired word of God through the lips of others. The Gospel is the direct teaching of Christ. It is therefore the more important. In the past this was symbolized by the reader's position on the ambo. He stood on a lower step to read the Epistle, and went to a higher step to read the Gospel. Another ceremonial distinction is that while reading the Gospel, the priest or deacon faces the people.

The function of the Epistle is to pave the way for the Gospel, so that the direct teachings of Christ may better be understood. That is a practical reason for reading the Epistle first.

The Epistle brings out the theme of the mystery or feast. A few examples from the Missal will indicate this:

Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost:

The Epistle (Acts of the Apostles 8:14-17) records that the Holy Ghost was given by the Apostles through the laying on of hands.

Votive Mass for the Sick.

The Epistle (Saint James 5:13-16) advises the sad, the sick and the sinner. The sad should pray. The sick should have the priests brought in to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. The sinner should confess.

The Intermediary Chants

After the Epistle, before the solemn moment of the reading of the Gospel, there are certain chants to be sung, known as the Gradual, the Alleluia, the Tract and the Sequence. This moment of song and poetry just after the Epistle gives us a chance for private and immediate meditation before the lips of Christ speak His divine teaching. It is a time of silence and rest, in which our souls may receive the full benefit of the Epistle, and prepare for the Gospel.

There are very human reasons given for placing these chants between the Epistle and the Gospel:

(1) Lest the lessons should grow wearisome, these chants are designed to break the monotony. (2) The catechumen was given a chance at this time to consider and to sum up the lesson of the Epistle and to prepare his mind for the important teaching of the Gospel. (3) In the primitive Mass, it was necessary to fill in the time needed to arrange the procession for the Gospel, which liturgists say was probably the chief reason for the Gradual.

The Gradual

What it is: The Gradual usually consists of two verses of a psalm. Sometimes they are taken from other parts of the Bible, and some Graduals have even been composed by churchmen. The name "Gradual" comes from the Latin word *gradus,* "a step," referring to the ancient custom of singing this selection from the step of the ambo where the lector had just read the Epistle. It was once called "the Responsory," from the fact that its first part was an answer, or response, to the Epistle. The chanter, standing on the ambo step where he could be seen, would sing or chant one verse and the people would chant another, and so alternately till the Gradual was completed.

Position of celebrant: When the Gradual is read, the celebrant keeps his hands on the Missal where he had them for the Epistle, still expressing the thought that work is necessary if the teachings of Scripture are to be fulfilled in the soul.

In a Low Mass the Gradual is read by the celebrant. In a High Mass the celebrant first reads it, and then while he pauses it is sung by a member of the choir. The Gradual is the only solo in the Mass not sung by the celebrant or his assistants. This is in part because of the extremely intricate Gregorian music to which the Graduals are set. Even trained voices have a difficult time with this music.

Purpose: Like all the other variable parts of the Mass, it gives the particular liturgical thought of the day. This specific thought or feeling of the season or saint's day runs through the whole Mass, imparting to it a special unity.

Since it is a variable part of the Mass, the Gradual is found in the Proper of the Season, the Proper of the Saints or the Common of the Saints.

When omitted: The Gradual is omitted from the Saturday in Easter Week to the Octave of Pentecost. During this time (except on rogation days and Whitsun eve) the Gradual gives way to the Greater Alleluia. Its quiet mood is too gentle for the exuberant joy of Paschaltide.

At other times the Gradual gives place to the Tract, which is more sad, and thus more suited to Lent and other penitential days.

The Beauty of the Gradual

Though there were very likely certain practical reasons for the insertion of the Gradual as we have already said, a reading of some of these exquisite spiritual poems makes us realize that the Graduals were sung or said also for their own sake. They are little masterpieces, and their musical setting is equally beautiful. The following example, the Gradual of the feast of the Guardian Angels, arranged in poetic form, illustrates their unusual quality:

"He hath given His angels charge over thee,
To keep thee in all thy ways.
In their hands they shall bear thee up,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The Alleluia

"Alleluia" is a Hebrew word meaning "Praise the Lord." The Alleluia is a cry of utter joy. When Tobias describes the glory of the Jerusalem above, which the splendor of the earthly city faintly images, he says: "All its streets shall be paved with white and clean stones: and Alleluia shall be sung in its streets." Saint John also hears it sung in heaven: "And I heard as it were a voice of a great crowd, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, 'Alleluia! for the Lord, our God almighty, now reigns!' " (Apocalypse 19:6).

Use: The early Christians esteemed this word so highly that they uttered it only on the most solemn occasions. At first in the Latin Church the Alleluia was sung only at Easter and during Paschaltide. Saint Gregory extended its use to other feasts. The verses or prose which accompany the Alleluia are not always from Scripture. At times, especially for some of the feasts of outstanding saints, the Church has written them herself. Saint Augustine wrote the Alleluia verse for the feast of the Purification. Read it in your Missal.

When omitted: Because the Alleluia strikes a chord of thrilling happiness, it is omitted from the Mass during the nine weeks of penance before Easter from Septuagesima to the Mass of the Easter Vigil, and also on the fast days and ember days of the liturgical year. Advent retains the Alleluia because the penitential character of the season is relieved by the tender expectation of Christmas.

When the Gradual is omitted and only the Alleluia is sung, it is known as the Greater Alleluia, because its structure then becomes more elaborate, consisting of two Alleluias, a verse from Scripture, a third Alleluia, and another Scriptural verse, and then a final Alleluia. This Greater Alleluia is sung during Eastertide, with the exception, noted earlier, of Easter Week itself, when the ordinary Gradual and Alleluia are sung.

How sung: During most of the year the Gradual and the Alleluia are combined in this way: the Gradual, two Alleluias, a Scripture verse, and then a single Alleluia in which the final "A" is trilled joyously on a series of notes. Saint Augustine says: "He who sings the jubilus [Alleluia] does not express himself by words; he gives forth a joyous sound not put into words. . . . His song makes known his joy too great for words to express." Saint Jerome writes to the same effect: "We sing the jubilus because we cannot put into words or syllables or letters how much we ought to praise God."

The tender and special love of the faithful for this magnificent chant is shown in the touch of regret that marks the laying aside of its singing during seasons of mourning. It returns at the Mass of the Easter Vigil with much pomp.

The Tract

When the Alleluia is not used, what is called the Tract usually takes its place. The name comes from the Latin *trahere,* "to draw." Liturgical writers attribute the use of this word to the ancient practice of drawing the psalm, or reading, out in a slow, measured tone without any interruption from the choir. Like the Gradual, it was sung as a solo by a deacon from the ambo.

The Tract is added to the Gradual in place of the Alleluia when the mournful nature of the season or feast does not permit a note of ringing joy. It usually consists of three or four verses taken from the Psalms. In the early Church entire psalms were sung. A vestige of this practice may be found in the Masses for the First Sunday of Lent and the Second Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday). The Tract for the First Sunday of Lent consists of a large section of Psalm 90. Sometimes other parts of Scripture are read. Tracts are used also on ember days not in Paschaltide, in Requiem Masses, in all feastday Masses, from

Septuagesima to Holy Saturday, and in the Masses of the season in Lent except on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The Tract repeats and emphasizes the thought or feeling which has already been expressed in the Gradual. Examine the classic Tract or prayer begging for forgiveness which is used on Ash Wednesday and on the Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent. Refer to the Tract in the Mass for the Sick. Compare it with the Gradual. How poignantly these verses chant the cry of human pain! If you read many Tracts, you will experience their power and purpose, especially as they relate to, complement or take the place of Graduals and Alleluias.

At this point it is very necessary to refer to your Missal in order to fix the above facts in your mind in an orderly way. Find a normal use of Gradual and Tract together, as in the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Find the arrangements mentioned above in the Masses for the First Sunday of Lent and the Second Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday).

The Sequences

The Sequences are poems which on certain occasions are added to the Alleluia or the Tract. The word sequence, from the Latin *sequi,* "to follow," is used because it means "something that follows after." The Sequences are Proper parts of the Mass and you will find them in the Proper of the Missal.

In ancient times the last note of the Alleluia was sung for a long time until it became sheer melody without words. In time appropriate poetic words were added to this prolonged note, and this in turn became the musical composition we now call the Sequence.

Every Sunday in the year except those of the penitential season at one time had a Sequence of its own. The rite at Lyons still observes this ancient custom. But this large number led to imperfection: some were carelessly written, others were without distinction. Therefore the Church rigidly examined the entire collection and retained only those of remarkable excellence and appropriateness. For general use, these five were kept: (1) "Victimae Paschali," proper to Easter; (2) "Veni Sancte Spiritus," proper to Pentecost; (3) "Lauda Sion," proper to Corpus Christi; (4) "Stabat Mater," proper to the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary; (5) "Dies Irae," proper to Masses for the Dead.

Dramatic Use of the Easter Sequence

During the Middle Ages, the Sequence for Easter was used as a play. Choirboys represented the angels, Mary Magdalen and the other holy women who went to the sepulchre on Easter morn. The first part of the hymn honors the Resurrection. Soon it addresses its lines to Mary:

> "What thou sawest, Mary, say,
> As thou wentest on the way."

Mary answers:

> "I saw His glory as He rose again,
> I saw the tomb wherein the Living One had lain;
> Napkin and linen clothes and angels twain.
> Yea, Christ is risen, my hope, and He
> Will go before you into Galilee."

Then the chorus repeats Mary's answer with a clanging melody "like the blare of triumphant trumpets." This Sequence was often acted in connection with the Divine Office. The singing took place after Matins, followed by the "Te Deum" and the solemn office of Lauds.

This dramatic presentation of the words of the Easter Sequence was the origin of our modern drama.

Discussion Aids:

1. Which of the prayers of the Mass already studied have asked forgiveness of sins? paid tribute to the Blessed Trinity? presented petitions?
2. How did the reading of the *Epistles* at Mass develop? What is the meaning of the priest's position while reading the Epistle? Why do the people sit during the Epistle? Why

are the Epistles so called? Who wrote most of them? For what purpose? In this connection, what is said in the Epistle to the Colossians? the Thessalonians? Which Apostles wrote Epistles? Why is this part of the Mass sometimes called "lessons"? What is the source of the "lessons"?

3. In what order were the Scriptures read in the early Church? When did *conformity to the liturgical year* begin? How did it begin? What changes resulted from this conformity?

4. Who was *the reader* of the Epistles in the early Church? Why? by what "order"? What change developed in the ninth century? How was the Epistle presented in the early Church? Why does the server answer "Deo gratias" at the end of the Epistle? How was this expression used in the early Church? What does Saint Paul say to Timothy of the value of Holy Scripture?

5. What is *the relation of the Epistle to the Gospel?* What ceremonial distinction is made in reading the Gospel? What is the function of the Epistle? Why is it read first? What does the Epistle bring out in the Votive Mass of the Holy Ghost? in the Votive Mass for the sick?

6. What are the *intermediary chants?* What do they provide? What is the first human reason for including intermediary chants? What did this moment provide for the catechumen? for the Gospel procession?

7. What is *the Gradual?* What is its source? What is the position and action of the celebrant while reading the Gradual? Why? What is the purpose of the Gradual? When is it omitted? What is the Gradual for the feast of the Guardian Angels? What is its meaning?

8. What does "*Alleluia*" mean? What does Tobias say of Alleluias? Saint John (Apocalypse)? How did the early Christians esteem this word? How did they use it? Why is the Alleluia omitted? When? How is it sung?

9. What is the *Tract?* When is it used? What is its source? What does the Tract repeat and emphasize?

10. What are *Sequences?* What does "sequence" mean? Why has the Church rigidly examined the sequences? What five

were retained for general use? How was the Sequence for Easter used in the Middle Ages? What developed from this dramatic presentation?

Religious Practices:

1. At Mass read with reflection the special prayers for the feast being celebrated.
2. Offer the Mass with the priest intelligently and prayerfully.

Unit Three

LESSON XIV

THE GOSPEL AND THE SERMON

WE HAVE seen thus far that the Mass of the Catechumens consists of prayers and teaching intermingled. The first part is entirely composed of prayers and actions which purify our souls for the great mystery to follow; the second, or instructional, part is made up of teaching, joined with the prayers necessary to preserve the spiritual harmony of the lessons, and the unity of the whole Mass.

The climax of the Mass of the Catechumens is the reading of the Gospel. We will consider (1) the preparation for the Gospel by means of the prayer "Munda cor meum" ("Cleanse my heart and my lips") and the prayer "Jube domne benedicere" ("Pray, sir, a blessing"); (2) the Gospel itself; and (3) the sermon.

"Munda cor meum" — "Cleanse my heart and my lips"

After the Epistle and the intermediary chants have been completed, the celebrant goes to the middle of the altar, and, profoundly bowing, says the prayer "Munda cor meum":

> "Cleanse my heart and my lips, O God Almighty, Who didst cleanse the lips of the Prophet Isaias with a live coal: vouchsafe, of Thy gracious mercy, so to cleanse me that I may worthily proclaim Thy holy Gospel. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

The reference to Isaias in the prayer recalls the occasion when his lips were purified with a coal of fire by an angel, as preparation for his commission to preach God's mighty word. Fire symbolizes the grace of the Holy Spirit, which consumes all imperfections and cleanses the heart so that the priest, thus purified, may make the words of Christ's teaching part of his own priestly expression.

The "Munda cor meum" is found in the Ordinary of the Mass because it is said every day in the same words.

"Jube domne benedicere" — "Pray, sir, a blessing"

The second prayer, "Jube domne benedicere," is not said at Requiem Masses. The forms of this prayer differ in Solemn High Masses and Low Masses:

At a Solemn High Mass the Gospel is sung by a deacon, who kneels before the celebrant and asks his blessing, saying:

> "Pray, sir, a blessing."

The priest responds by blessing the deacon, using these words as he does so:

> "May the Lord be in *thy* heart and on *thy* lips, that *thou* mayest worthily and in a becoming manner announce His Gospel.
>
> "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

At a Low Mass, however, the celebrant himself reads the Gospel, and therefore he addresses God directly, and asks Him for a blessing:

> "Pray, Lord, a blessing" ("Jube *Domine* [instead of *domne*] benedicere").

Then he says:

> "May the Lord be in *my* heart and on *my* lips that *I* may worthily and in a becoming manner announce His Gospel."

This prayer is a petition by the official teachers of the Church asking God to make them worthy to announce the glad tidings of redemption in accordance with His design. It is also a cry of the priest for God's help in making the words of the sermon which he is to deliver truly in accord with Christ's teaching.

The Gospel

Our English word "gospel" comes from the Anglo-Saxon words *god,* or "good," and *spell,* or "tell," which together signify good tidings, or good news. Christ Himself used the words "good news" on the occasion of His first public appearance in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-18). When He rose up to read and the book of Isaias the Prophet was given to Him, He read the passage appointed for the day, which was as follows:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He has anointed Me; to bring *good news* to the poor. . . ."

Good tidings, in those days, were usually brought by word of mouth. The Gospel is chiefly the spoken word, the preaching of the realization of the prophecy of the Kingdom of God.

The Purpose of the Gospel

In the Epistle Christ teaches us through the inspired words of the Prophets and the Apostles. In the Gospel He speaks to us Himself. He teaches us the purpose of our existence, as He taught the people on the hillside [illegible] Palestine. "God, Who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the Prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by His Son . . ." (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

God Himself has inspired the record of the deeds and the mysteries of our redemption which we hear in the Gospel. In it we see a picture of the Saviour through the eyes of those men who wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Christ becomes very near to us. His life on earth, His talks with His friends and His enemies, His actions, His Passion — all are clothed in sublime reality. Therefore, besides being instructed by the Gospels, we are inspired by them to a deeper love for Jesus.

The reading of the Gospel in the Mass is a liturgical action. God Himself, our Teacher, is honored in His word. Therefore a wealth of ceremony, full of solemn meaning, has developed around the reading of the Gospel, and by these incidental ceremonies we further carry out the purpose of the Mass, the worship of God.

The Content of the Gospel

The Gospel readings are always taken from the writings of one of the Evangelists: Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Sunday Gospels are arranged so that they relate the outstanding events in the life of Christ as they follow one another through the liturgical year. As to the other Masses, not much light has been shed upon the principle the Church has followed in her choice of the various Gospels. However, three things may be seen as guiding this arrangement in most cases:

1. The order in which the books of Sacred Scripture are arranged in the canon. (The canon is the number of books properly belonging in the Bible, as determined by the Church.) In the early days the books were probably read continuously as they are arranged in the Bible.

2. The spirit of the feast or the mystery being solemnized. The feast of a saint was enriched by a Gospel message which either mentions his own name, if he lived during New Testament days, or calls attention by its matter to some particular virtue or act of his life. Consult the Gospels for the feasts of Saint Gregory Thaumaturgus and Saint John Damascene, and note how the words of our Lord find a special brightness in reference to the lives of these men.

3. The place where the sacred rites were performed. The Station Churches, which we have already mentioned, were named for various great saints, and some reference to their lives was

sought in the Gospel chosen. On the Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent, for instance, the station was kept at the Church of Saints Sylvester and Martin, and the Gospel chosen relates our Lord's raising of the widow's son from the dead; the Epistle also relates a similar miracle by Eliseus. In these two lessons we have a clear allusion to Saint Martin, a wonder-worker of Gaul, to whom God gave the power of raising several people from the dead. Again, on Sexagesima Sunday the station was at the Church of Saint Paul's Outside the Walls. The Gospel relates the parable of the Great Sower at this station, no doubt to honor Saint Paul, who was a great sower of the word of God from the banks of the Jordan to the Pillars of Hercules. It would be interesting to examine other Masses which were celebrated at the Station Churches, and to note the harmony between the name of the Station Church and the lessons of the Mass.

The Reading of the Gospel

The celebrant, after having said the two prayers of preparation, pronounces in an audible voice the greeting, "Dominus vobiscum" ("The Lord be with you"), to which the server responds "Et cum spiritu tuo" ("And with thy spirit"). After this greeting, which expresses the mutual desire of priest and people to announce and receive the Gospel worthily, the priest says: "The beginning" or "the continuation, of the Gospel according to Mark" (or one of the other three Evangelists). When the priest has announced the title of the Gospel, the server says: "Gloria tibi, Domine" ("Glory be to Thee, O Lord") in order to thank God for the spiritual blessings contained in the Gospel, which are about to be dispersed. At the end of the reading the server says: "Laus tibi, Christe" ("Praise be to Thee, O Christ"), in thanksgiving. This is followed by a petition which the celebrant makes while he kisses the Missal: "By the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out." For the words of the Gospel, above all other words, excite in the heart acts of sorrow and love.

Actions of Priest and People

The high regard in which the Church holds the Gospel is shown by the actions she performs to manifest its dignity:

1. During the preparatory prayers the Missal is moved from the Epistle side of the altar to the Gospel side, which is sometimes spoken of as the more honorable side because it is under the right arm of the cross. The Gospel is also superior to the Epistle in its teaching function. A practical reason in the early Church for moving the Missal at this time was to leave the Epistle corner of the altar free for receiving the gifts of the people at the Offertory, and to make room for the paten, which in former days was very large.

2. The priest makes the Sign of the Cross with his thumb on the Missal itself. This is not to bless the Gospel for the day but to signify that this is the Book of the Crucified. For the words of the Gospel are the words of the Cross.

3. Both priest and people participate in signing brow, lips and heart with the cross as a token that we must carry the doctrine of our crucified Redeemer in our mind, on our lips and in our hearts, and as a reminder that we must acknowledge our Catholic faith in thought, word and deed.

4. The priest takes a position half-turned toward the people, to show that the lesson is for them. At the same time the people stand, in token of honor to God, Who is addressing them.

5. When the priest has finished reading, he kisses the sacred text in reverence and love. In ancient times, each member of the congregation kissed it also.

6. During a Solemn High Mass, a procession forms at the foot of the altar and the book of the Gospel, circled by lighted candles and incense, is carried to a place in the sanctuary. Here the deacon incenses the Gospel book as a symbol of Christ, and then chants the Gospel. The book is next taken to the celebrant, who kisses it as a mark of reverence, and then, as the representative of Christ at the altar, is incensed by the subdeacon. The ceremony of taking the book to the celebrant for the kissing is another rite which we inherit from the days when the

Gospel was sung from the ambo. It also reminds us of the Stational Masses when the Gospel book was carried in procession surrounded by lights and incense.

The Sermon

A sermon is required to follow the Gospel at parochial Masses on Sundays and holydays of obligation. These sermons usually take the form of a homily or explanation of the Gospel for the day. This practice is as old as the Church. Saint Justin Martyr tells us that it was the custom in his time (first half of second Christian century) to read the Scriptures to the people, and then to explain their meaning. The ancient Jews always preached after reading their books of the Law.

Many of the sermons of the early Fathers of the Church are still used. Every priest reads parts of them when he recites his daily office. Origen, Saint Leo the Great, Saint Gregory the Great, Saint Augustine, Saint Jerome and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux were great homilists, or preachers on the Gospel.

During the time of persecution, great care was taken that the mysteries and prayers of the Church should not be overheard by enemies. If Saint Chrysostom, for example, saw an unbeliever or an enemy in the audience, he would break off his sermon with: "The initiated know what I mean." Once he said: "I wish to speak openly, but I dare not on account of those who are not initiated. . . . But I shall endeavor, as far as possible, to explain myself in disguised terms." Often swift writers were sent by the pagans to hide in the crowds and take down the words of the preachers, so that by this evidence they might be condemned.

Historical and Liturgical Notes

Many customs and events show the great reverence of early and medieval times for the Gospel. We select a few:

At the Office of Matins on Christmas night, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire sang the Gospel, which begins with these words: "Now it came to pass in those days, that a decree went forth from Caesar Augustus. . . ." For this unusual occasion the emperor was vested in a richly decorated dalmatic. Before singing, he drew his sword and brandished it three times to show his willingness to fight to the death in defense of the divine word.

Military knights, such as the Knights of Saint John, were accustomed to unsheathe their swords at the Gospel of the Mass to show that they would defend it even to the shedding of blood. Kings and queens put aside their sceptres and crowns while the Gospel was read as a symbol that all are equal in the humble position of servants before the Lord.

Ancient respect for the Gospels was shown by the massive covers of gold, silver and precious stones in which they were bound. Even the cases in which the books were kept were often of beaten gold, finished with the most exquisite workmanship. Sheets of gold, studded with pearls and precious stones, were used to cover one ancient Missal, whose letters were of gold upon a purple ground.

The kissing of the book probably comes from the old custom of kissing important documents of whatever nature. Royal papers were kissed upon being received. Documents direct from the Pope are always shown this token of respect.

Our Disposition at the Gospel

Origen said: "Do not lose a single word of the Gospel; if, when you are receiving Holy Communion, you rightly take care to see that not the slightest particle falls, why should you not believe that it is wrong to neglect even a single word of Jesus Christ?"

In the Masses of the year we live again the life and teachings of Jesus. With the disciples we meet Him on the mountain, by a wayside well, at the crossing of two caravan trails, or beside a blue lake in Nazareth, and we hear Him teaching the important truths of His own Divinity, of our eternal destiny, of the way we should lead our lives. More than this, the choice and the setting of the Gospels help us to penetrate the feelings and thoughts which stirred in the heart of Jesus, and make us realize the meaning of Saint Paul's words: "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

Finally, the proper hearing of the Gospel, added to the prayers and other lessons of the Mass of the Catechumens, is a complete preparation for the Eucharistic Sacrifice. We should be able to say with the disciples on the road to Emmaus: "Was not our heart burning within us while He was speaking on the road and explaining to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32).

Discussion Aids:

1. Of what does the Mass of the Catechumens consist? When is the climax reached? How do we prepare for the reading of the Gospel? What prayer is said? What does the reference to Isaias recall?
2. When is the prayer *"Pray, sir, a blessing"* omitted? When is it said? What is the priest's response when a deacon sings it? How is this prayer said at a Low Mass? Why is this prayer said?
3. What does the word *Gospel* mean? When did Christ use the word? How did He use it?
4. Why is the Gospel read at Mass? Why has a wealth of ceremony developed in reading the Gospel?
5. From what are the *Gospel readings* taken? How are the Sunday Gospels arranged? In other Masses what three things may have guided the arrangement? What is the greeting of priest and server before the Gospel begins? What does this greeting express? What ceremony follows?
6. How is the high regard in which the Church holds the Gospel shown? Why is the Gospel read at the right side of the cross? How does the priest signify the "Book of the Crucified"? Why do priest and people sign brow, lips and heart? What is the position of the priest? of the people? What follows the reading of the Gospel? What is the Gospel ceremony during a Solemn High Mass?
7. Why is a *sermon* given at Mass on Sundays and holydays? What precaution was taken against enemies of the Church during persecution? Why?
8. What customs show the reverence of the early Church for the Gospel? How did the Christian Roman Emperor par-

Unit Three

LESSON XV

THE CREDO

THE Mass of the Catechumens is brought to a close by a profession of faith in all that we have received from the Gospel of Christ. The sublime message contained in the Gospels would remain sterile and of no avail if on our part we were not to proclaim our acceptance of it and our belief in the whole message of our Lord. This we do by the act of faith we now make in the Credo, or Creed. It is only by such faith that we are prepared to continue on to the profound mystery of the Mass.

Implicit faith is the keynote of this part of the Mass. Faith is a first necessity, even of our natural lives. The work of the world could not be carried on if we did not believe in many people and things without question. We cannot test the truth of all we read and hear. Our lives are too short and busy for proving everything we need to accept. By faith in what we hear, we know, for example, who our parents are. In school our acceptance of history and geography is based upon faith. We take the word of teachers, government officials, newspapers, friends, servants, doctors, lawyers, dentists — all on faith.

This everyday human faith is based upon everyday human authority. But the divine faith which we profess in the Mass is based upon divine authority. Each day we believe the word of weak and fallible men. Why then should we not believe the divine word of God, Who is Truth? "If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater" (1 John 5:9).

The Creed (from the Latin *credo,* "I believe") is an orderly expression of the chief truths of our Christian faith. There are, as we shall see, several different compilations of these truths.

These brief and concise outlines of faith were originally intended for memorizing and recitation by the newly converted. At Baptism, the person about to be admitted to the Church was asked to recite the chief doctrines of our religion. This is still a part of the Baptismal ceremony.

Number of Creeds

Of all such statements of the principal points of the Catholic faith, three Creeds are outstanding. (1) The Apostles' Creed, which we learn in our catechism and recite most frequently, as, for example, at the beginning of the rosary. An ancient tradition maintains that it was composed by the Apostles themselves before they separated to convert the various parts of the world. (2) The Athanasian Creed, which Saint Athanasius is believed to have composed. It is a more lengthy exposition of the two mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation. (3) The Nicene Creed, which is the one used in the Mass. This is really the Apostles' Creed with certain clarifying clauses officially added by the Church to oppose the misinterpretations of heretics. The Nicene Creed was composed at the Council of Nicea in 325 A. D. and revised at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A. D.

Introduction of the Nicene Creed into the Mass

The Nicene Creed was introduced into the Mass of the Eastern Church as a hymn immediately after it was composed, in the fifth century, and it has been recited ever since. It did not find its way into the Mass of the Roman rite until the beginning of the eleventh century, under Pope Benedict VIII. Some say that this was because the Western Church had never fallen into the errors opposed by the Nicene Creed, and hence there was no need for making open profession of a faith that was held without question.

The custom of singing the Creed during High Mass was introduced at the express request of Henry II, Emperor of Germany. When he came to Rome for his coronation he remarked that the Creed was not sung. The Pope commanded that thereafter it should be sung immediately after the Gospel and sermon, and this practice has continued to the present day. Before this, it had been recited only.

Place in the Mass: The Creed is introduced after the Gospel as a solemn act of faith in the Gospel and all the doctrines of divine revelation. It is also a suitable introduction to the Mass of the Faithful, or the sacrifice proper, because it professes our faith in God Almighty, to Whom the sacrifice is to be offered; in our Divine Saviour, Who is both Priest and Victim; and in the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifies us.

When the Creed Is Used

The Creed is in the Ordinary of the Mass because, when it is used, it is always recited or sung in the same words. It is used in the following Masses: (1) On all the Sundays of the year, in memory of Christ's Resurrection on Sunday, and also in honor of the Blessed Trinity to Whom Sunday is dedicated; (2) on all feastdays of our Lord; (3) on all feasts of the Blessed Mother; (4) on the natal feasts of the Apostles and the Evangelists and on feasts of the Doctors of the Universal Church; (5) in solemn votive sung Masses.

In the Latin Church the Creed is never said in Masses for the dead, but the Greeks use it even then.

Ceremonies of Reciting the Creed

The priest says the entire Creed while standing at the middle of the altar in front of the crucifix. When he says, "Credo in unum Deum" ("I believe in one God"), his hands are raised, open and slightly apart. He then joins his hands and bows toward the crucifix. He bows to it also at "Jesum Christum" and at words which express adoration. When the priest comes to the words "Et homo factus est" ("And was made man"), both he and the people, who are standing, bend the right knee so as to touch the floor. This is in adoration of the Incarnate Word, and in memory of His deep humility in coming to earth for our sakes and taking our nature upon Him.

At High Mass the choir sings the Credo, while (as in all parts of the Mass sung by the choir) the priest recites it at the altar.

The Structure and Meaning of the Creed

As we have already observed, the Nicene Creed is based upon the Apostles' Creed with certain explanatory clauses added to offset some of the heresies which sprang up in early centuries. At this point we should make a chart divided into two sections with the headings: Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed. In one column list the phrases of the Apostles' Creed, and directly opposite list the phrase or phrases of the Nicene Creed which profess the same doctrine.

The affirmations of the Creed may be divided into five groups, bearing on: (1) God, (2) the Father, (3) the Son, (4) the Holy Spirit, and (5) the Church.

"I believe in one God . . ."

We believe first in one God Who is infinite in every perfection, containing within Himself the fullness of every good. This fullness of all good is found in one God alone.

In the early chapters of this text we dealt with the various gods conceived as existing by the many idolatrous races who have peopled the earth; we noted the fact that these imagined deities represented imperfect and frequently degraded and horrible ideas, and that the Jews alone, of all antiquity, preserved the pure conception of one, all-powerful and all-perfect God. This conception, made much clearer and more definite by the teachings of Christ, is what we Catholics profess in this first article of the Nicene Creed.

"The Father Almighty . . ."

We begin here to acknowledge the Trinity, for the word Father demands mention of a Son. A distinction of Persons within one and the same nature is thus made.

"Almighty" was the name most often given to God in Holy Scripture, and it brings to our minds His power to do everything not opposed to His divine nature. The Creed refers to His creation "of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible."

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ . . ."

We next affirm our faith in the sovereignty of Christ, both as God and as Man. He is the Lord of earth, of angels and of men.

The name "Jesus" means "Saviour," and refers to His mission of redeeming the world. "Christ" means "The Anointed One." As priests, prophets and kings were anointed in the Old Law, it brings to our mind that our Lord was Priest, Prophet and King, anointed with the blessed fullness of grace and Divinity. He is a Priest, as we have seen in a previous lesson, the great Highpriest of all time. He is a Prophet, not merely in the sense of a seer, but also in the more important and truer sense of a teacher: from Him we learn the Gospel which leads to heaven. Christ is a King — both as God, since He created the world, and also as Man, since He has earned our eternal fidelity by dying for us.

Our Lord is the only Son of the Father. He was "born of the Father before all ages" and shares with the Father all the infinite perfections of Divinity. By Him, equally as by the Father, "all things were made."

The Creed next affirms our belief in our redemption through our Lord's death. On our account the Son of God descended from heaven and took flesh of the Virgin Mary, becoming Man by the power of the Holy Ghost.

For our sakes He suffered the crucifixion under Pontius Pilate — and the mention of it here in the Mass has a special force because we are now to repeat that sacrifice in an unbloody way.

He rose from the dead, the Creed continues. The work of redemption was over; man was reinstated in God's good graces. Our Lord ascended into heaven, to sit at the right hand of the Father; whence He will come to us again in glory, as the final Judge of all, both living and dead. But let us recall, in making these affirmations of the Creed, that though our Lord has gone from us, He has also remained with us in the Mass — an unending repetition of His death, a perpetual token of His presence, until the time when He shall come to take His faithful ones home forever.

"And in the Holy Ghost . . ."

The Holy Ghost is Lord because He has the same nature and the same authority as the Father and the Son, from Both of Whom He proceeds, and with Whom He is equally adored. The Holy Ghost is the Life-giver, the Sanctifier: from Him come all the gifts of grace which are the true life of the soul. He it was Who spoke to the people of God through the Prophets, calling them to the true worship of God; He it is Who now guides the Church and sanctifies the souls of men.

"And in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church . . ."

Triumphantly these words ring out in proclamation of the nature and the mission of the Catholic Church. She is One because she has one head and one doctrine the whole world over. She is Holy because her work is to make us who are her members holy; her Founder is holy; her doctrine is holy; and her saints are holy. She is Catholic, because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations and maintains all truths. She is Apostolic, because she holds firmly the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles, and her priests trace back their power and authority in an unbroken line from the Apostles to this day.

The Church has given us new life in Baptism — that all-important life of the soul in virtue of which we may share in this Sacrifice of the Mass. It is this life, and the strengthening of this life which the Mass affords us, that gives us hope of some day possessing that which in the Creed we finally acclaim — after the resurrection of the dead, life everlasting.

The End of the Mass of the Catechumens

The Creed brings us to the end of the Mass of the Catechumens. As we have seen, this part of the Mass is designed as a preparation for the sacrifice which is to take place in the Mass of the Faithful. It helps us to cleanse ourselves from those imperfections which would hinder our perfect participation in this supreme act; it refreshes our minds with those divine words and doctrines upon which this great act rests as a foundation. Thus we have two kinds of acts as preparation for the sacrifice to follow: acts of contrition and acts of faith.

Thus far we have been considering the liturgy as derived principally from the rites of the Synagogue. In the next unit we shall consider the liturgy of the Last Supper; we shall be seated, as it were, about the table with the twelve Apostles, with Jesus at the head.

Discussion Aids:

1. How is the Mass of the Catechumens brought to a close? Why do we then proclaim our faith? Why is faith a necessity of even our natural lives? Upon what is this everyday human faith based? What does Saint John say of the testimony of God? What does "creed" mean? What does the Creed contain? What is its purpose?
2. What is the *number* of outstanding *Creeds?* What is the traditional source of the Apostles' Creed? the Athanasian Creed? the Nicene Creed? When was the last mentioned composed? When revised? Where? How do the three Creeds differ?
3. When was the *Nicene Creed introduced* into the Mass of the Eastern Church? the Roman rite? Why is the Creed sung during High Mass? Why is the Creed introduced after the Gospel?

4. Why is *the Creed used* on all Sundays? On what other times is it used?
5. What are the *ceremonies of reciting the Creed?* When does the priest bow? Why? When do priest and people genuflect? Why?
6. On what is the Nicene Creed based? Why was it written? What five divisions are suggested for the affirmations of the Creed?
7. What should we mean when we say, *"I believe in one God"? "The Father Almighty"?* What does "Almighty" bring to our minds? How do we affirm our faith in Christ as God and Man? What does "Jesus" mean? What does "Christ" mean? What do these titles bring to our minds? How in the Creed do we affirm our redemption through Christ? Though "ascended into heaven," how does Christ remain with us? Why do we affirm our faith in the Holy Ghost?
8. In what words of the Creed do we proclaim the nature and mission of the Church? How is the Church *One? Holy? Catholic? Apostolic?* How do we receive the life of the soul? strengthen it?
9. How does the Mass of the Catechumens cleanse us? refresh us? What is the principal source of the liturgy considered thus far?

Religious Practices:

1. Coöperate with the grace received from the Holy Ghost in the sacraments and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
2. Imitate the early Christians by thinking and living with and in the Church.

UNIT FOUR:

Mass of the Faithful: Offertory, Consecration

LESSON XVI

BEGINNING OF THE MASS OF THE FAITHFUL

WE HAVE thus far been studying the Mass of the Catechumens, the parts of which are largely drawn from the liturgy of the Synagogue. In the Mass of the Faithful, we make our entrance upon the liturgy of the Last Supper. This was the sublime and sacred mystery of sacrifice which the early Christians guarded so zealously that only the baptized and proven ones were permitted to share it.

Three lines from the Sequence, "Lauda Sion," offer an essential summary of the Mass of the Faithful:

"His own act at supper seated
Christ ordained to be repeated
In His memory divine."

The Mass of the Faithful consists of: (1) the Offertory; (2) the Consecration; (3) the Communion; and (4) the Thanksgiving.

The Mass of the Catechumens is, as we have seen, divided into two general divisions: (1) when we speak to God, and (2) when God speaks to us. The Mass of the Faithful also follows this general plan: (1) from the Offertory Chant to, but not including, the Lord's Prayer, we make offering to God with Christ; (2) from the Lord's Prayer through the Last Gospel, God gives to us.

You could represent this with a diagram in the form of a triangle with equal sides, the left side moving upward from the Offertory Chant to the apex — God — and the right side moving down from the Our Father to the Last Gospel.

The first part of the Mass of the Faithful is the Offertory, which is part of the upward movement wherein we surrender ourselves with Christ to Almighty God. An examination of your Missal will reveal that there are, exclusive of those prayers said only at a Solemn High Mass, ten prayers in the Offertory, beginning with the Offertory Chant, and ending with the Secret. Locate the beginning of the Offertory in your Missal, as well as the prayer that begins the second part of the Mass of the Faithful — the Consecration.

In this lesson we shall study the following points, which are either parts of the Offertory or related topics: (1) the question as to who the faithful were; (2) the first words of the Mass of the Faithful; (3) the Offertory Procession; (4) the congregation's active participation; (5) true charity; (6) the Offertory Chant; (7) the sacrificial elements.

Who Were the Faithful?

In previous chapters of this text we have constantly spoken of "the faithful," and referred to the fact that they were the fortunate ones who were allowed to remain for the real sacrificial part of the Mass. How could a catechumen become one of the faithful? He had, first of all, to study the truths of the Faith, which he learned from private instruction and from the instruction given in the Mass of the Catechumens. After that he presented himself to the priest just before the Mass on Holy Saturday, when he formally asked for Faith, and recited the Creed as evidence of his knowledge of the chief doctrines of the Faith. Thereupon he received the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. He was now one of the initiated. He could now take part in the Mass of the Faithful.

A white vestment was placed upon him to signify his baptismal innocence, and this robe was worn until Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter). It was removed at the Low Sunday Mass when these words of the Introit were chanted:

> "As newborn babes, alleluia, desire the rational milk without guile, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia."

On Low Sunday, Mass was celebrated at the Station Church of Saint Pancras. All the newly baptized were there, and on their minds was impressed the generosity with which they should bear testimony to our Divine Lord. For Saint Pancras, the patron of that church, was only fourteen years old when he offered the testimony of his blood for the religion of Christ.

This elaborate procedure for admitting a catechumen into the Church has been much simplified. Do you know wherein the present way differs from the ancient method?

First Words of the Mass of the Faithful

The Mass of the Faithful begins with the familiar and meaningful salutation, "Dominus vobiscum" ("The Lord be with you") and its response, "Et cum spiritu tuo" ("And with thy spirit.") The celebrant then, with "Oremus," invites the people to pray but, it is interesting to observe, no prayer seems to follow. That an ancient prayer of the faithful which opened their Mass has been dropped at this point, is the conclusion of scholars. Such a prayer is still used by the Eastern Church, and the Western rites once had it. Saint Augustine in his "Epistles" alludes to it several times, and says that it is recited before blessing what lies on the Lord's table. In another writing he speaks of the bishop exhorting the people to pray for unbelievers, catechumens and the faithful at this point in the Mass. The solemn prayers which follow the singing of the Passion on Good Friday are seemingly the prayers which were often said before the Offertory in response to the "Oremus"; and this is the only trace of them remaining in the Roman Mass today.

It is probable that these prayers were omitted from the Ordinary because of their length or because they repeat the special prayers for various needs and different classes of people which are included in the Canon of the Mass.

Some Offertory Chants in the Missal are much like prayers which might be considered a response to the priest's invitation to prayer. The Offertory of the Mass for the Dead, for instance, those for the Mass on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, and the Mass on the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of Mary, have the definite character of intercession.

Another supposition of scholars is that the "Oremus," or invitation to prayer, is in reality a request to the people to unite themselves to the prayers and the important actions which are about to follow in the whole of the Offertory.

The Offertory Procession

Today, almost universally, the priest prepares to offer up the bread and wine immediately after he has said the "Dominus vobiscum" and the Offertory Antiphon, soon to be discussed. But in some countries the ancient custom of allowing the faithful to make offerings of bread, wine, candles and money at this point still continues. This recalls the fact that formerly (until the thirteenth century) the bread and wine for the sacrifice and the means for the priest's support were given by the people at this early part of the Mass. A procession was formed, led by the men of the congregation, and offerings were brought up to the sanctuary in clean linen cloths. Not only the articles needed for the sacrifice itself, but anything that was required for the Church or that was a fit expression of submission to God might be offered, such as oil for the sanctuary lamp, incense for Solemn High Mass, ears of corn and clusters of grapes as the offering of the first fruits of the land to God from Whom come all good things. A trace of this custom persists in Ordination Masses, when the young man being ordained presents wax candles to the ordaining bishop at this point. In the Mass for the Consecration of a Bishop likewise, the new bishop offers two lighted candles, two loaves of bread and two small ornamented kegs of wine. Another trace of the Offertory Procession remains in the Roman rite in the carrying of the chalice to the altar by the subdeacon at a Solemn High Mass. In the Greek Church even today the bread and wine are carried in solemn procession around the altar and then placed on it.

The celebrant (who in the early Church was usually a bishop) met the people and received their gifts. The wine was poured into a large chalice carried by the deacon. The bread was put into an ample linen cloth carried by the subdeacon. After this the celebrant washed his hands. The bread and wine needed for the immediate sacrifice were put on the altar, while the rest was set aside for the poor. Traces of this ancient observance are to be found in Masses today. It is the deacon who has charge of the chalice in a Solemn High Mass, as he did of the chalice of wine. In a Pontifical Mass the bishop washes his hands before leaving his throne for the Offertory.

Value of the Offertory Procession

This ceremony, while practical, was not an empty external action. The people by this active sharing in the offering dedicated themselves to their Creator and associated themselves with the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ. This self-surrender and self-offering is the fundamental principle of the Mass, as it is of the Christian religion and Christian life. Moreover, these gifts were not individual: the procession made of them a group offering. It was one gift to God of one united Christian body.

Though it is no longer observed, the recollection of it and the traces of this early custom still found in our Mass illustrate (1) the personal part we should take in the action of the Holy Sacrifice; (2) the spirit of true charity which should animate us.

Active Participation

Their active part in the Sacrifice of the Mass impressed on the minds of the people the real nature of this act of divine worship. The gifts of bread and wine were foods, and hence a symbol of our natural life, which they nourish and sustain. They were, for that reason, an offering that signified the total submission of himself which the offerer made to God, and thus they helped to express in a deeper way the whole purpose of the Mass.

Though this ceremony is no longer observed, the Mass is still the same act of worship. We may not be able any longer to offer our personal gifts of bread and wine; but we should not fail to make the exterior and interior submission to God which this ceremony typified.

True Charity

Besides the offerings already mentioned — those for the uses of the Church — food and later on money were brought for the needy. The deacons were in charge of the work of receiving and distributing these contributions. Thus the Mass helped the faithful to know the meaning of real charity. The offerings were presented to God at His altar, and in His Name then given to the afflicted for the relief of their distress. This intimate union of the acts of giving to God and giving to His suffering ones could not but make the people see Christ in the faces of the hungry and the sick. They were brought to realize their membership in His Mystical Body and their resulting obligation to their suffering fellow-members. Herein lies the essence of true charity.

During the collection we have the opportunity to practise the same charity that animated the Offertory Procession in the early Church. The contribution which we drop into the plate is our gift to God and His poor. It is the fruit of our labor and work. By it we give a sign that we surrender and offer ourselves to God through His Divine Son. It is our tiny share in the bread on the paten and the wine in the chalice. We should remember that hearing Mass devoutly and offering gifts at the collection are an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God. In those ways we admit that we owe Him tribute for all that we have. In earlier times emperors and kings brought gifts in their own princely hands. The Emperor Theodosius, a great defender of the Church, writes: "When we go into the church we leave the weapons of our guards outside, and humbly we remove from our head the crown, the symbol of our kingship. We stand in the sanctuary long enough only to leave our offering there, and with that done, expecting no privileged position, since these belong to God and to His special servants at the altar, we at once seek

must be handled with care and reverence
moment. The Church also makes certain r

The bread must be made of pure wh
ural water, and, in the Western rite, it
yeast is to be added). This rule was not
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it was unleavened bread that our Lord

The wine must be pressed from ripe
fully fermented and have no artificial ing
or white. A little water is mixed with th

The reverence which should attend
sacrificial elements was observed in a stri
famous Benedictine Abbey of Cluny. As
in the ground, the monks sang joyful p
to Almighty God, they gathered the ripe g
and washed each separate kernel which wa
of the altar. One of the holiest monks w
grain in a special sack to the mill. Here h
and covered them with cloths. He veile
that only his eyes were uncovered, and g
the sieve was washed and the flour sifted.
of the monastery church was privileged
with the help of two monks and a brothe
white they baked the breads in a blessed u

This lesson should make us resolve fi
to the Victim offered at Mass. In company
of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, we
offer ourselves — our lives and everything w
God in and with and through the sacrifice o

Discussion Aids:

1. What is the source of the liturgy of the
   How did early Christians guard the
   sacrifice? What sequence offers a sum

our place among our secular subjects. Thereby we detract nothing from the Majesty of God."

The Offertory Chant

In the days when the Offertory Procession was observed, an antiphon and psalm were sung while the faithful made their offering. With the gradual abandonment of the custom in the Middle Ages the psalm was dropped; the antiphon however has been preserved.

The name "Offertory" which designates this antiphon does not mean that the thought which it expresses necessarily is about the offering of the bread and wine. Rather, the Offertory Antiphon varies with the feast and performs the same function as the Introit and the Gradual: it repeats the dominant thought of the mystery or saint's life which is being celebrated. It gets its name from the fact that it is sung in connection with the offering of the gifts of the Church to God.

It is recited by the celebrant with hands folded before his breast. In a High Mass the choir sings it also.

Once, under the Old Law, while the highpriest offered the blood of the grape, the sons of Aaron sounded their silvery trumpets, and the singers lifted up their voices and caused the great house to resound with sweet melody (Ecclesiasticus 50). This instance may have had an influence on the early Church in introducing a chant during the offering of the gifts to God. However, there is no sign of its having been used before the fourth century. Evidently up to that time the gifts were presented by the people in silence.

To the careful student the Offertory Chants reveal their early use. Their slow rhythm and tonal music bring to our minds the long procession of Christians carrying their gifts to the altar. But thought and intimate application will transform that procession into one of all the souls of the Catholic Church, quietly bringing the offerings of heart, mind, body, soul and life itself to the altar of God.

Some examples will show how appropriately the Offertory Chants reveal their use as processional accompaniment and express the sentiments of self-sacrifice.

Offertory Antiphon for Ember Friday in September:

> "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee: and thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's."

Offertory Antiphon for Pentecost:

> "Confirm this, O God, which Thou hast wrought in us; from Thy temple, which is in Jerusalem, kings shall offer presents to Thee, alleluia."

When read slowly, each of the above chants gives evidence of its purpose: each is marked with a measured and stately step. In the Latin this is more evident, of course.

Notice the poetic beauty of the Offertory Chant for the feast of the Most Holy Rosary. Cardinal Wiseman has said that Catholic liturgy bears throughout the impress of true poetry, and this is a clear instance of that truth:

> "In me is all grace of the way and of the truth;
> In me is all hope of life and of virtue.
> Like a rose planted on the rivers
> I have budded forth."

Read the glowing Offertory Chant for Epiphany; the touching plea of the Church to the Blessed Virgin in the Chant for the feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. The Offertory for Requiem Masses, which is a beautiful prayer filled with the characteristic tender pity of the Church for the dead, should be required reading. It is, by the way, the only Offertory Chant which retains the original form: an antiphon, a verse and the concluding antiphonal words repeated.

The Sacrificial Elements

Because the bread and wine of the Offertory are to be changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at the Consecration, they must be handled with care and reverence even before that solemn moment. The Church also makes certain rules for their preparation.

The bread must be made of pure wheat flour mixed with natural water, and, in the Western rite, it must be unleavened (no yeast is to be added). This rule was not followed when the bread for the sacrifice was supplied by the people. The Greeks to this day use only leavened bread in their rite. The use of unleavened bread is based on the observances of the Jewish rite; it was unleavened bread that our Lord used at the Last Supper.

The wine must be pressed from ripened grapes; it must be fully fermented and have no artificial ingredients. It may be red or white. A little water is mixed with the wine during the Mass.

The reverence which should attend the preparation of the sacrificial elements was observed in a striking way in the world-famous Benedictine Abbey of Cluny. As they planted the seeds in the ground, the monks sang joyful psalms. Singing praises to Almighty God, they gathered the ripe grain and carefully chose and washed each separate kernel which was destined for the bread of the altar. One of the holiest monks was selected to carry the grain in a special sack to the mill. Here he washed the millstones and covered them with cloths. He veiled himself in white so that only his eyes were uncovered, and ground the wheat. Then the sieve was washed and the flour sifted. The highest superior of the monastery church was privileged to prepare the bread, with the help of two monks and a brother. Clothed in spotless white they baked the breads in a blessed utensil.

This lesson should make us resolve firmly to unite ourselves to the Victim offered at Mass. In company with all the members of Christ's Mystical Body, the Church, we should surrender and offer ourselves — our lives and everything we have — to Almighty God in and with and through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Discussion Aids:

1. What is the source of the liturgy of the Mass of the Faithful? How did early Christians guard the sacred mystery of the sacrifice? What sequence offers a summary of the Mass of

the Faithful? In what does the Mass of the Faithful consist? What general plan do the two major divisions of our Mass follow? State the general plan of the Mass of the Faithful. What is the Offertory? How does it begin? How end? What parts of the Offertory or related topics are to be studied in this lesson?

2. How could a catechumen become one of *the faithful?* When did he present himself to the priest? How? What was the ceremony for the reception of the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation? Who was Saint Pancras?

3. What are the *first words of the Mass of the Faithful?* What follows the celebrant's invitation to pray? What does Saint Augustine say of prayers now omitted from the Ordinary? What is the supposition of some scholars as to the meaning of the "Oremus" uttered by the priest?

4. What was *the Offertory Procession?* What were the articles of offering? What trace of this custom is found in Ordination Masses? in the Mass for the Consecration of a Bishop?

5. What was the *value of the Offertory Procession?* What is the fundamental principle of the Mass? What do traces of this early custom in our Mass today illustrate?

6. What is the advantage of *active participation* in divine worship?

7. How was *true charity* promoted at the Offertory? How may we practise the charity animated by the Offertory procession? Why should we offer our gift at the collection? What did Theodosius say of the bringing of gifts to God?

8. What was the *Offertory Chant?* How does the Offertory Antiphon vary? How does it get its name? What Old Law ceremony may have influenced the introduction of the chant? What do the Offertory Chants bring to mind? How do they express sentiments of self-sacrifice? What is the purpose of the Offertory Antiphon for Ember Friday in September? for Pentecost? for the feast of the Most Holy Rosary?

9. What rules govern the preparation of *the sacrificial element* of bread? of wine? How did the Benedictine monks of Cluny prepare bread for the altar? What should we resolve from this lesson?

Religious Practices:

1. Your Sunday contributions to the collection are your gift to God and His work. Be generous.
2. Unite yourself to the Victim offered at Mass. Offer yourself to God in and with and through Christ.

LESSON XVII

OFFERING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

AFTER the Offertory Chant has been recited, we enter into the Offertory itself. Up to this time, the chalice has stood on the outspread corporal in the center of the altar. It is now uncovered and placed outside the corporal at the priest's right. The celebrant now offers the large host, by elevating the paten upon which it rests, and reciting the first offering prayer.

It is at this point that we should offer ourselves by expressing those sentiments of submission discussed in the last chapter. All the disappointments, little failures, sickness and other burdens common to all of us can be sanctified in union with the offering of Christ. If they are accepted humbly and with resignation in memory of the Sacrifice of Calvary, which is now being renewed at the altar, the sacrifice will be more acceptable to God.

The Offering Prayers

There are three offering prayers to be considered. They are found in the Ordinary of the Mass, for they are said in the same words every day. These prayers should be read and re-read in your Missal throughout the course of this lesson, so that the spirit of this part of the Sacrifice of the Mass may be seen.

These offering prayers were placed in the liturgy of the Mass as the Offertory Procession began to fall into disuse. They express in words what the faithful of the early Church had expressed in the act of offering the very elements to be used in the sacrifice. The ceremonies and prayers of this part of the Mass dedicate the bread and wine to the special service of God, and excite our reverence and devotion toward the mystery to be accomplished.

The First Offering Prayer

While holding the host on the paten the celebrant says the first offering prayer:

> "Receive, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this spotless host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for mine own countless sins, offenses and negligences, and for all here present; as also for all faithful Christians, living and dead, that it may avail for my own and their salvation unto life eternal. Amen."

The words "this spotless host" refer to what is as yet only bread. The bread is given this title, not because of what it is now, but because of what it is going to become at the Consecration. The Church does not offer either the bread or wine absolutely and in themselves, but she offers them that they may be converted into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

Note to Whom the offering is made; for what four classes of people it is made; for what purpose it is offered; and what is offered.

Actions: When he has completed this prayer, the celebrant lowers the paten with its burden and with it traces a cross over the spot where the host is now to be placed — the center of the corporal near the front, over the cross cut in the altar-stone. This reminds us that the same sacrifice which was once offered on the cross is now, and perpetually, offered on the altar. After the host has been put down, the paten is partially concealed under the right side of the corporal.

At a Solemn High Mass: At a Solemn High Mass the paten is instead wrapped by the subdeacon in a corner of the loose vestment around his shoulders (the humeral veil) and held partially elevated at the foot of the altar until the end of the Pater Noster (the Lord's Prayer or Our Father). This recalls the early observance whereby the hosts for the people were consecrated on the paten and distributed from it at their Communion (see page 221). When this custom ended, the large paten was given to the subdeacon to hold until it was needed again so that it might not get in the celebrant's way. The words addressed today to a subdeacon at his ordination point out his special duty of taking charge of the bread of oblation.

The Wine and Water

The server now brings the wine and water cruets from the side table (credence table), and awaits the priest at the Epistle corner of the altar. The priest takes the chalice and goes toward the server. Having taken the cruet of wine, he pours into the chalice the wine to be changed into the Sacred Blood. This he does not bless because it is a symbol of Christ, into Whose blood the wine is soon to be changed. He traces the outline of a cross over the water, because it represents the people, who require a blessing before being united to their Saviour. At Masses for the Dead the water is not blessed. The priest now adds a few drops of water to the wine in the chalice.

Reasons for mixing water with the wine: Several reasons are given for this ceremony. (1) The first is a literal reason: the custom was derived from the ancient Jewish one, which still prevails in the East, of tempering wine with a little water before drinking it. The Jews considered it a violation of etiquette to neglect this custom. Water was mingled with the wine at the Passover feast, and as our Lord undoubtedly observed this custom at the Last Supper, it is now incorporated in the Mass.

There are also mystical reasons for this custom. (2) The mingling of water and wine suggests the union of the people with Jesus Christ. The prayer said during this act asks that "by the mystery of this water and wine we may be made partakers of His Divinity." (3) The mixture reminds us of the blood and water which issued from our Lord's side when the lance pierced it. In the Eastern liturgy the celebrant pierces the host with a miniature lance just before the water is poured into the wine. (4) Some see in this mingling a reference to Holy Baptism by which we are all saved. (5) It suggests, finally, the union of the divine and human natures in the Sacred Person of our Lord.

Prayer for the Mixing of the Wine and Water

While the celebrant pours the water into the wine, he recites the prayer which begins, "Deus, qui humanae substantiae dignitatem. . . . " This is a very old prayer which, slightly differently expressed, was formerly a Collect for the Feast of the Nativity. A reading of it will show how suitable it was for this purpose.

This prayer brings out beautifully the mystical meaning of the fusion of wine and water. It suggests a union between ourselves and our Saviour so close that by it we share in a measure of His Divinity, just as He shared in our humanity. It refers to our salvation through the life and death of our Blessed Lord.

The Second Offering Prayer

The priest brings the chalice back to the center of the altar, where he raises it, his eyes fixed on the crucifix, and offers the wine as he did the host, saying the second prayer of offering:

> "We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency, that it may ascend in the sight of Thy divine majesty with a sweet savour, for our own salvation and for that of the whole world. Amen."

Why the plural form, "we offer," instead of the singular, "I offer," is used in this prayer is a question for speculation. Some say that "we offer" is used because in a Solemn High Mass the deacon is required to touch the chalice and to recite the offering prayer with the priest, and thus the action is performed by both. Another reason for the use of the plural "we" is to remind the faithful that they too have a very real share in the offering of the elements which they have supplied.

We said when discussing the offering of the bread that it is not the Eucharistic offering itself. This is of course also true of the wine. When the priest lifts the chalice at the Offertory, he asks in anticipation that God will accept this "chalice of salvation," because at the Consecration it will be filled with the Blood of Him Who is our salvation. In this connection, turn to the two prayers that come soon after the Consecration, beginning "Supra quae" ("Upon which vouchsafe to look") and "Supplices te rogamus" ("We most humbly beseech"). Compare the second offering prayer with these two prayers and note the striking similarities: (1) the sacrifices of the patriarchs are mentioned on both occasions, in the former implicitly, in the latter explicitly; (2) the symbolic language is the same — "the sight of Thy divine majesty"; both implore that God will be kind and look with favor on our part in the offering. But what is the difference in the actual substance offered in each case?

After the second offering prayer, the priest lowers the chalice and with it traces the shape of a cross over the corporal, after which he places the chalice on the corporal behind the host and covers it with the pall. He bends slightly forward now, and with the palms of his hands united and just touching the altar, recites the prayer of the three young men in the fiery furnace.

Prayer of the Three Young Men

This prayer is modeled on the prayer of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace (as related in Daniel 3:39, 40), who steadfastly refused to adore the golden statue erected by Nabuchodonosor, choosing instead to be cast into the flames as victims to secure mercy from God for their people. Through a miracle they emerged unharmed. The idea of self-offering expressed in this prayer dominates the thought of both priest and people at this part of the Holy Sacrifice.

The Prayer to the Holy Ghost

After the prayer of the three young men, the priest, erect once more, raises his eyes and first stretches out, then lowers, his hands, saying:

> "Come, O Sanctifier, almighty and eternal God, and bless this sacrifice prepared for Thy holy name."

At the word "bless" the priest traces the shape of a cross over the host and chalice. (A little cross is printed in your Missal wherever this gesture is made.)

This prayer is the only place in the entire Mass where the Holy Ghost is invoked expressly by name. Pope Benedict XIV says that it is addressed to the Third Person of the Trinity in order that, as the Body of our Lord was formed by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin, it may be formed anew by the same Holy Spirit upon the altar of God.

Incensing of the Offerings and of the People

At a Solemn High Mass, the offerings of bread and wine, the altar, the ministers and the people are now incensed. The incensing of the elements of sacrifice signifies that they are set aside from profane uses and devoted to God. The incensing of persons is a sacramental which symbolizes the graces which the sacrifice will obtain for us, and which also points out our willingness to offer ourselves to God with Christ in "the odor of sweetness." Referring to the incensing as the symbol of oblation of self, Saint Gregory the Great says: "The saintly soul makes, as it were, a thurible of its heart, which exhales its perfume before God."

Order of Incensing: (1) The priest first blesses the incense while he recites the prayer beginning: "Through the intercession of blessed Michael. . . . " Saint Michael the Archangel is invoked because he is the head of the legions of angels, and the patron of the Church Militant in her constant struggle with her enemies. (2) The priest incenses the bread and wine in the form of a cross while he says the prayer beginning: "May this incense which Thou hast blessed. . . . " (3) The crucifix and altar are now incensed. The prayer at this point is an exceedingly beautiful part of Psalm 140 with several strikingly fine images (for example, "the lifting up of my hands as evening sacrifice"). (4) The priest returns the thurible to the deacon, praying:

> "May the Lord kindle within us the fire of His love,
> and the flame of everlasting charity. Amen."

(5) Now the celebrant himself is incensed, and after him (6) the subdeacon, the deacon and the people.

At Masses for the Dead the priest alone is incensed, immediately after the incensing of the altar.

"Lavabo" — "I will wash my hands"

The priest now goes to the Epistle corner for the washing of his hands, or the Lavabo ("I will wash"), as it is called from the first word of the prayer he recites. In a Low Mass, this takes place immediately after the prayer to the Holy Ghost, and only the tips of the thumbs and index fingers are washed. These are known as the canonical fingers, as they are the only ones which are allowed to touch the Blessed Sacrament. For this reason, these fingers are anointed by the bishop at the priest's ordination. In a Solemn Mass, the priest does wash his hands, as they may have become soiled from incensing.

The washing indicates the perfect cleansing of the heart required for worthy celebration of Holy Mass. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem says: "This signifies that our souls must be purified from all sins and wickedness. For, as the hands are the instruments of action, the washing of them shows the purity of our desires." Saint Germanus says: "The washing of a priest's hands should remind him that he must approach the holy table with a clean conscience, mind and thoughts (the hands of the soul), with fear, meekness and heartfelt sincerity."

This ceremony is a sacramental which purifies our hearts if we take part in it with the priest by good interior dispositions of contrition and confidence. Part of Psalm 25 beginning, "I will wash my hands among the innocent," is recited during the Lavabo. We should proclaim with David our earnest desire to glorify God in His Church, at His altar and in holy gatherings.

The "Gloria Patri" ("Glory be to the Father") is added at the close, but it is omitted in Masses for the Dead, and in Masses of the Season of Passiontide.

Prayer to the Holy Trinity

After the Lavabo, the priest returns to the middle of the altar, bows low, and recites a prayer beginning, "Suscipe, sancta Trinitas" ("Accept, O Holy Trinity"). The preceding prayers of the Offertory are addressed to the Father and to the Holy Ghost. This prayer is addressed, however, to the three Persons of the Godhead.

Several points of doctrine appear for us in this prayer to the Trinity: (1) Sacrifice is the supreme act of worship and offered to God alone; (2) the offering is in memory of the Passion of our Lord, because the Eucharist is a memorial of His death; (3) the offering is in memory of the Resurrection, because here the immortal Body of Jesus Christ becomes present; (4) the offering is in memory of the Ascension, because Christ, Who died for us and rose again in the same Body as is in the Eucharist, has ascended to heaven to intercede for us; (5) the sacrifice is offered in honor of Mary and the saints, but not to them. Read this prayer to the Holy Trinity and find the words which bring out these doctrines.

"Orate, fratres" — "Pray, brethren"

The celebrant now kisses the altar, turns to the congregation and says the "Orate, fratres" — "Pray, brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father almighty." The server replies in the name of the people: "May the Lord receive the sacrifice at thy hands, to the praise and glory of His name, to our benefit, and to that of all His holy Church." To this the priest answers "Amen."

This prayer tells us once more that the offering of the Sacrifice of the Mass is a collective act. It is not the Sacrifice of the priest exclusively, but that of all the congregation and of the entire Church. It likewise illustrates the various ends for which Mass is being offered.

The Secret Prayers

We have now come to the prayer which dedicates the offerings. It was originally the only Offertory prayer, and was said while the psalms were still being sung during the Offertory Procession. This may supply an explanation of the word "secret," the term by which it is known: it was recited "secretly," that is, in a low voice, so as not to disturb those singing the Offertory Chant for the Procession, who in the ancient Church were stationed in the choir close to the altar. An additional explanation is that the term comes from the Latin "oblata secreta," that is, "separated gifts," because the prayer was said over the gifts selected from among all those offered for the sacrifice.

The Secret is found in the Proper part of the Missal. Thus there are two Proper prayers in the Offertory section of the Mass: (1) the Offertory Chant, at the beginning of the offering, and (2) the Secret Prayer, at the end of the offering.

The Secret is very much like the Collect. The same number of each is said. They both proclaim the feast of the day in their feeling or thought. The difference, however, is this: the Collect is a special prayer to God, or it relates to the feast of the day directly, without reference to the sacrifice. The Secret, besides bringing out the thought of the feast, also asks God to accept the gifts. For this reason it usually has two petitions. Notice, for example, how the petitions of the Secret for the feast of the Holy Family refer both to the Holy Family and to the sacrifice. Note the two parts of the Secret for the Epiphany. Examine the Secret for the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, and note how both the sacrifice and the feast are referred to. Examine several Secret Prayers with the purpose of finding these two petitions.

Throughout the Offertory we have asked God to accept, bless, sanctify and consecrate the gifts of our offering. In the Secret we entreat Him, in return for the offering which we are making, to grant us the graces we need. The Secrets for Pentecost and Corpus Christi are illustrations of this petition for graces.

The Last Words of the Offertory

In order that all the members of the congregation may signify their participation in the Offertory, the first part of the Mass of the Faithful, the celebrant recites aloud the last words of the last

Secret: "world without end." The practical use for this in the early Church was to signal the choir that it was time to stop singing the Offertory Psalm which had been continuing all this time. But it also joins us, by the "Amen" which the server answers in our name, to the sentiments and the petitions that have been expressed by the priest in these silent prayers.

Discussion Aids:

1. What are the actions of the priest in preparation for the Offertory? Why should we offer our joys and our burdens in union with the offering of Christ?
2. Why should we read and re-read the *offering prayers?* When were the offering prayers placed in the Mass? What do they express? What is their purpose?
3. What is the *first offering prayer?* Why is the bread called "this spotless host"? Why does the Church offer the bread and wine? What are the actions of the celebrant after the prayer? Of what does this action remind us? How does the ceremony vary at Solemn High Mass? What does this ceremony recall?
4. What is the action of the priest in pouring *the wine and water* into the chalice? What is the literal reason for mixing the water and wine? What are five mystical reasons?
5. What prayer does the priest recite during this action? What does this prayer bring out?
6. What is the action of the priest during the *second offering prayer?* What three reasons are suggested for the use of "we" instead of "I" in this prayer? What is the similarity between the second offering prayer and the two prayers said soon after the Consecration?
7. What is the *prayer of the three young men?* What idea does it express? What prayer to the Holy Ghost follows? Why does Pope Benedict XIV say this prayer is addressed to the Holy Ghost?
8. What is signified by the *incensing of offerings? of the people?* What is the order of incensing?
9. What is the *Lavabo?* When does it take place? What does the washing indicate? Of what does Saint Germanus say the

washing of a priest's hands should remind him? What is the source of the Lavabo prayers?

10. What is the *prayer to the Holy Trinity?* What points of doctrine appear on sacrifice in this prayer? What reference is there to the Passion? the Resurrection? the Ascension?
11. What does *"Orate, fratres"* mean? What does the server reply to this prayer? What does this prayer tell us? What does it illustrate?
12. What is the *Secret Prayer?* Why is it so called? Where is it found? How is the Secret like the Collect? How is it different? What is the purpose of the Secret?
13. Why are the *last words of the Offertory* recited aloud? How was this of practical use in the early Church?

Religious Practices:

1. At the Offertory recall that you have a very real share in the offering of the elements your contribution supplies.
2. Offer your disappointments, failures and sorrows in union with the offering of Christ on the altar.

Unit Four

LESSON XVIII

THE PREFACE

WE HAVE now come to the Canon of the Mass, which is the most sacred part of the entire sacrifice. All that has gone before has been a preparation leading up to this solemn action, which is the continuation of the sacrifice that took place in the Upper Room and upon the cross of Calvary. So indescribably sacred is this part of the Mass that it would seem proper to study it on bended knees. It enshrines the exact words which our Saviour uttered at the Last Supper, in virtue of which the bread and wine are changed into His own Body and Blood.

The Word "Canon"

The word "canon" is from the Greek language. Literally, it signifies a straight rod, or a measuring rule, such as those used by masons and carpenters. In architecture the term was applied to the level; in weights and measures the canon was the tongue of the balance. The Church has used the word with the meaning of something definitely fixed. The canon of Scripture, for example, is the fixed list of books which the Church recognizes as inspired by God; ecclesiastical laws are called canons because they are fixed rules of faith and conduct; canonization is the process by which a person is officially added to the fixed list of saints worthy of public veneration. The Canon of the Mass is the fixed or unchanging part of the Mass. Other parts vary with the feast or season, but the Canon, except for phrases in the Preface, Communicantes and "Hanc igitur" on the greater feasts of the year to honor their special spirit, always remains the same.

Its Great Antiquity

The Canon is not only a fixed part of the Mass, but it is also one of the oldest prayers of Holy Church. We do not know the precise date at which it was composed, or who the real author is. Some credit its composition to Pope Saint Damasus I (reigned 366-384). It is known for certain that the Canon has not been altered since the days of Saint Gregory the Great, who reigned in the last part of the sixth and the early part of the seventh century. And Saint Gregory himself added so little that we are justified in saying that for the most part our Canon goes back to men who spoke face to face with our Divine Saviour and His disciples. This sacred memorial is one of the Church's most venerable possessions.

There is even some evidence for the Apostolic origin of the Canon. In the year 538 Pope Vigilius wrote to a certain bishop: "We send you the text of the Canon itself in the form which we have, by the favor of God, received from Apostolic tradition."

The Church is extremely careful to prevent innovations in this precious part of the Sacrifice of the Mass. She forbids anyone to meddle with it under pain of severe censure. For example, the correction of a printing error was forbidden for fear of destroying its antiquity. In 1815 the Sacred Congregation of Rites was petitioned by thousands of people, including cardinals and bishops, to consent to inserting the name of Saint Joseph in the Canon because of the singular devotion of the faithful to the foster-father of Christ, but even this request was not granted.

Of What the Canon Consists

The Council of Trent says that the Canon consists of (1) Christ's own words; (2) prayers received from the traditions of the Apostles; and (3) prayers ordered by the Holy Pontiffs.

The Canon extends from the "Sursum corda" — "Lift up your hearts" — to the Minor Elevation before the "Pater noster."

Before the eleventh century the Canon was contained in a separate book called the Sacramentary, which was the Mass-book of the early Middle Ages. Later it was included in the Missal, which developed out of the earlier books used at Mass, and was placed in the middle for convenience. In a Pontifical Mass, the bishop reads the Canon from a separate book.

The Canon Is One Great Prayer

The Canon at first sight may seem to be a series of distinct prayers, but in reality it is one great and solemn Eucharistic prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving which has several parts. We must above all else grow familiar with the Canon, and know it from beginning to end.

Using your Missal, note the prayer and action which open the Canon and the prayer and action which close it. You will find various prayers of offering, several prayers of thanksgiving, several prayers of remembrance of different classes. It is interesting to note how these prayers are arranged on each side of the Consecration, giving an exquisite balance to the entire Canon. For the sake of seeing the pattern, these various prayers are here shown in their relation to the Consecration. They will, of course, be studied separately in their proper places:

Thanksgiving:	The Preface.
Remembrance:	The whole Church is remembered in the "Te igitur . . ."
Remembrance:	The living are commemorated in the "Memento . . ."
Remembrance:	The saints are commemorated in the "Communicantes . . ."
Offering:	In the "Hanc igitur . . ." the priest renews the offering.
Offering:	In the "Quam oblationem . . ." he repeats the offering.
Consecration:	(To which the "Unde et memores . . ." relates.)
Offering:	In the "Supra quae . . ." he asks God to receive the Victim.

Offering:	The same sentiments are repeated in the "Supplices . . . "
Remembrance:	The "Memento" of the dead follows.
Remembrance:	The "Nobis quoque peccatoribus . . ." commemorates the living.
Remembrance:	The "Per quem haec . . . " commemorates all creation.
Thanksgiving:	In the "Per ipsum . . ." the highest honor and glory is given to God through the Victim.

The Preface Is Part of the Canon

In the Missal, the Preface is found in a separate place; and in the large altar Missal, there is a picture between the Preface and the "Te igitur" (the prayer which immediately follows it), which also might give the impression that the Preface is not part of the Canon. But this insertion is the result of the medieval custom of illuminating the manuscripts of the Canon. The artist-monks put a good deal of effort into illustrating the letter "T" with which the "Te igitur" begins. It eventually developed into a full-page representation of the Crucifixion.

In spite of this division, the Canon begins with the Preface. As the preface of a book gives us a large view of the purposes of the book, so the Preface of the Mass tells us what we are going to do, our reason for doing it, and those who will act with us. It emphasizes the giving of thanks for all the benefits and graces we receive from the life and work of our Lord. It thus does what our Lord did, according to Saint Luke's account of the first Mass: "And having taken bread, He gave thanks."

Parts of the Preface

"Lift up your hearts": The celebrant has ended the last of the Secret Prayers by saying aloud: "Per omnia saecula saeculo-

rum" — "World without end." Now, before opening the fourth part of the Mass, he greets the congregation: "Dominus vobiscum" — "The Lord be with you"; to which the server responds in the name of the congregation: "Et cum spiritu tuo" — "And with thy spirit." But the celebrant does not turn to the people as usual, so lost is he in the tremendous action to follow.

Next the priest raises his hands and says: "Lift up your hearts" and the server assures him that the faithful "have lifted them up unto the Lord." "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," the celebrant continues, joining his hands and bowing his head; and the faithful respond through the lips of the server: "It is meet and right."

This opening dialogue demands that we banish distractions, that we thank God for the great gift of His Divine Son, that we prepare to celebrate the Eucharist. By the Sacrifice of the Mass we will thank our heavenly Father for the sacrifice of salvation. The response, "It is meet and right," is our admission that it is not only proper but a duty thus to express our deepest gratitude.

This dialogue is one of the gems of our primitive liturgy. It is identical in all the liturgies of the Church. It strikes the first note of the chief theme of the Canon: thanksgiving. The solemn upward motion of the celebrant's hands during this part has been compared by many liturgists to the outspreading wings of a dove preparing to fly, recalling the words of David: "Who will give me the wings of a dove, and I will fly and be at rest."

Dialogues of this type in the Mass usually serve to introduce the most sacred and venerable prayers. Saint Cyprian, who died a martyr in the year 258, testifies to the antiquity of the Preface when he describes the Eucharistic Sacrifice as beginning with an exhortation to the faithful to lift their hearts to God and to give Him thanks. Our feelings of gratitude will be stimulated if we recall how fervently these early Christians responded to the "Lift up your hearts. . . . " They were constantly persecuted. They were hated and insulted at every turn. Their property was taken from them. Their lives were always in danger. But still there was no hesitation, no reservation, in the sentiments which welled upward from their hearts. The knowledge of the great Gift they possessed, which nothing could take away from them, made them grateful to God and caused them to sing out their gratitude. No trouble therefore should prevent us from lifting our hearts to God with deepest sincerity.

Opening of the Preface: Although the body of the Preface sometimes differs, the opening and closing words vary but little: "It is truly meet and right, just and availing unto salvation, that at all times and in all places we give thanks unto Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord." This opening blends perfectly with the last response of the server: "It is meet and right." By it we are again made to realize that thanksgiving to God through Jesus Christ is a duty, a privilege and a means of grace.

Body of the Preface: The purpose of the Preface is to give thanks to God for some special part of His work for souls. The Common Preface is more general in its reference to these benefits than are those proper to the great feasts. The Preface of the Nativity, for example, expresses thanks to God because "by the mystery of the Word made flesh the light of Thy glory hath shone anew upon the eyes of our mind." The Preface of Lent mentions that God, by the fasting of the body, curbs our vices, elevates our minds and bestows virtue and reward. The Preface of Easter briefly and beautifully refers to Christ, the True Lamb, "Who by dying hath overcome our death, and by rising again hath restored our life." Examine the other Prefaces and note how each refers to the feast of the day or season.

The Preface of the Apostles has an interesting variation: it is addressed directly to Jesus Christ rather than to God the Father, referring to Him under the figure of the true, supreme and immortal Shepherd of His flock. A reading of this Preface will show you the suitability of this figure, for while the Apostles keep watch over His flock, they are merely the stewards of the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for His sheep.

The Preface of the Blessed Virgin has been called the Miraculous Preface because, as the story is, much of it was miraculously put in the mouth of Pope Urban II as he was singing High Mass in the church of our Blessed Lady at Placentia. Chanting the ordinary Preface, he had proceeded as far as the point where the Preface usually changes to suit the feast, when he heard angels above him singing the praises of Our Lady: "For she conceived Thine only-begotten Son by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; and losing not the glory of her virginity, gave to the world the Everlasting Light, Jesus Christ our Lord." The Pontiff had these words inserted into the ordinary Preface, and this later became the Preface of Our Lady.

Conclusion of the Preface: At the conclusion of the Preface we pray that our voices may join with the chant of the angels and so be carried into the sanctuary of heaven itself. The angelic choirs are named: explicitly, the Dominations, the Powers, the Heavens, which includes all the angels, and the Seraphim. Four different emotions or actions of the angels are extolled, and to them we join ourselves: praise, adoration, awe and joy. Thus we join with the whole heavenly host, whose duty and joy it is to worship God without ceasing. Saint Gregory the Great said: "At the time of sacrifice, heaven opens, and the angels in their choirs assist at the mysteries of Jesus Christ. The greater is united to the less, heaven is linked to earth; the worlds visible and invisible are made one."

During the body of the Preface, the celebrant stands with hands raised and separated, palms out.

The Sanctus

The Sanctus, which continues and terminates the Preface, is one of the oldest prayers in the liturgy. It was probably introduced into the Canon by Pope Saint Sixtus I, who lived early in the second century. Saint Clement of Rome, who died in 104 A. D., mentions that this hymn was sung by the people during the Mass.

The Sanctus is a song which earth has learned from heaven. The first part, the "Holy, Holy, Holy," is called the Hymn of the Seraphim; it honors the Adorable Trinity, and is derived from the Prophet Isaias, who records in stirring words one of his visions: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated: and His train filled the temple. Upon it stood the seraphims; the one had six wings, and the other had six wings: with two they covered His face, and with two they covered His feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said., Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is full of His glory" (Isaias 6:1-3). This part of the Sanctus reminds us that God is glorified in all His creation, but especially in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The second part of the Sanctus is the Benedictus, beginning "Blessed is He that cometh." This is a hymn of triumph addressed in welcome to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. It has its origin in the shout of joy with which the Jews greeted Christ as He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9).

Actions: While reciting the "Holy, Holy, Holy," the priest bows humbly to express the sentiments of reverence he feels, holding his folded hands before him. By this action he indicates his unworthiness to sing the praises of the Holy Trinity with the heavenly choir of angels. At the Benedictus, however, which is a triumphant salutation to Jesus, the priest stands erect. He feels closer to the Son of God Who became a man like to himself in all things but sin.

At a sung Mass the Preface is chanted by the celebrant. The music is simple plainchant, and its effect is stirring. The choir sings the Sanctus at its conclusion, and the Benedictus after the Consecration.

The altar-boy rings a small sanctuary bell at the Sanctus to remind the people of the near approach of the most sublime and solemn part of the Mass. This serves to focus their entire attention on the sacrifice which is now to be performed. Sometimes a candle on the credence table, known as the Sanctus candle, is lighted at this point to emphasize still further the approach of the Consecration.

Number of Prefaces

In the old Sacramentaries there were many Prefaces, of various lengths and for all occasions. The very ancient Leonine Sacramentary contained 267 Prefaces. The Roman Liturgy has fifteen Prefaces today. Among the more recent are the Prefaces for the feasts of Saint Joseph, Christ the King, the Sacred Heart and that for Requiem Masses.

The Prefaces are grouped in the Ordinary of the Missal. The Common Preface is used for ordinary weekday Masses, and the Preface of the Holy Trinity is used on most Sundays.

These are the various Prefaces used on special feasts. They are beautiful expressions of thanksgiving to God for His great gifts, and each one brings out the four ends of our worship, praise, adoration, thanksgiving and supplication.

1. *The Common Preface* is found in its place in the Ordinary of the Mass after the Secret Prayers. It is said throughout the year on feasts and days which have no Proper Preface.

2. *The Preface of the Nativity* is said from Christmas to Epiphany (*exceptions:* votive Masses within this time which have their own Proper Prefaces, the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday), on the feast of the Purification, and on the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus.

3. *The Preface of the Epiphany* is said on the feast of the Epiphany and through January 13. (This includes the feasts of the Holy Family and the Commemoration of the Baptism of Our Lord Jesus Christ.) The only exception would be if on a day intervening between January 6 and 13 a votive Mass with its own Proper Preface were said.

4. *The Preface of Lent* is said from Ash Wednesday until the Saturday before Passion Sunday, except on feasts which have a Proper Preface.

5. *The Preface of the Holy Cross* is said during Passiontide, except on feasts which have a Proper Preface; on the feasts of the Holy Cross, the Feast of the Precious Blood, and in Votive Masses of the Passion and of the Holy Cross.

6. *The Preface of Easter* is said from the Mass of the Easter Vigil until Ascension Day, except on feasts which have a Preface of their own.

7. *The Preface of the Ascension* is said from Ascension Day until the vigil of Pentecost exclusively, except on feasts that have a Proper Preface and when a votive Mass having a Proper Preface is said.

8. *The Preface of the Holy Spirit* is said from the vigil of Pentecost until the following Saturday inclusively, and whenever the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit is celebrated.

9. *The Preface of the Most Holy Trinity* is said on Trinity Sunday, at Votive Masses of the Blessed Trinity, and on all Sundays throughout the year, except on the Sundays in Paschaltide and those which have their own Preface.

10. *The Preface of the Sacred Heart* is said on the feast and at Votive Masses of the Sacred Heart.

11. *The Preface of Christ the King* is said on the feast of Christ the King.

12. *The Preface of the Blessed Virgin Mary* is said on feasts of Our Lady, except that of the Purification. It is also said at Votive Masses of the Blessed Mother.

13. *The Preface of Saint Joseph* is said on March 19, the Feast of Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Patron of the Universal Church; on May 1, the feast of Saint Joseph the Workingman; and at Votive Masses in honor of Saint Joseph.

14. *The Preface of the Apostles* is said at Masses of the Apostles and Evangelists, except on the feast of Saint John, December 27.

15. *The Preface for the Dead* is said at all Masses for the souls of the faithful departed.

From the exalted sentiments of the Preface we should learn the great lesson of gratitude so well that even in times of trouble we may be moved to give thanks to God with our whole heart.

Let us thank God for all He sends us, even though it may sometimes seem hard to bear: remembering that Christ began His Passion by giving thanks at the Last Supper before His painful death on the cross.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why is the *Canon* of the Mass so important? What does the word "canon" mean? What is the Canon of Scripture? Why are ecclesiastical laws called canons? What is canonization? What part of the Canon is not fixed?
2. Who is credited by some as author of the Canon? When did this Pope reign? What do we know for certain about the Canon in Gregory the Great's reign? What are we justified in saying about the origin of the Canon? What did Pope Vigilius write about the Canon in 538? What proof have we of the Church's great care of the Canon?
3. Of what does *the Canon consist?* When does it begin? end? What trace of an ancient custom in regard to the reading of the Canon is found in a Pontifical Mass?
4. Why must we grow familiar with the Canon? How are the prayers of the Canon arranged? Which are prayers of thanksgiving? remembrance? offering? consecration?
5. What is the *Preface?* Where is it found in the Missal? in the Altar Missal? What does the Preface of the Mass tell us? What does it emphasize?
6. How does the celebrant end the Secret prayers? After the server's reply, "Et cum spiritu tuo," what is the action of the celebrant? What does this dialogue opening the Preface demand of all present? How do the celebrant's actions recall the words of David? How does Saint Cyprian testify to the antiquity of the Preface? How did the early Christians respond to the Preface prayers?
7. How does the Preface open? What is the spirit of the body of the Common Preface? of the Preface of the Nativity? of the Preface of Lent? of that of Easter? of that of the Apostles? of that of the Blessed Virgin?
8. For what do we pray at the conclusion of the Preface? What emotions or actions of the angels are extolled? What did Saint Gregory the Great say of the time of sacrifice?
9. What is the *Sanctus?* When was it probably introduced? What is its source? What is the second part of the Sanctus?

To Whom is it addressed? What is its origin? What are the actions of the priest at the Sanctus? those of the altar-boy?

10. Why are there a *number of Prefaces?* What are the more recent ones of the Roman liturgy? How are the Prefaces arranged in the Missal? What does each Preface bring out? When is the Common Preface said? Name other Prefaces. What lesson should we learn from the Preface?

Religious Practices:

1. Grow familiar with the prayers and actions of the Canon.
2. Follow the example of the early Christians in expressing joy and gratitude for the Holy Sacrifice.

Unit Four

LESSON XIX

PRAYERS BEFORE THE CONSECRATION

THE Canon from this point has certain characteristics which it will be valuable for us to fix in mind before studying the separate divisions.

1. For convenience' sake we shall refer to each part of the Canon as a "prayer." However, it must be kept in mind that each of these parts is only a division of the one great prayer.

2. Another noteworthy feature of the Canon is the tracing of the outline of the cross over the elements, which is done repeatedly both before and after the Consecration. Count the number of times the cross is thus made in the Canon. Saint Thomas says that the priest in celebrating Mass uses the sign of the cross to express the Passion of Christ, which terminated on the cross. The Angelic Doctor says also that the crosses traced over the Sacred Elements *after* the Consecration are not for the purpose of blessing or consecrating, but only to commemorate the virtue of the cross and the manner of Christ's Passion.

3. A third, and outstanding, characteristic of the Canon is the deep silence which prevails immediately after the introductory Preface. The Silence of the Host now rules our hearts. Many reasons are given for the silent recitation of this part of the Mass: (a) From the earliest days it has been the custom to conduct the Consecration and the opening and closing prayers of the Canon in silence. The Church, scrupulous in her guardianship of this most venerable prayer, has therefore preserved the custom. (b) The silence indicates that the Consecration and sacrificial act is a priestly function, which only the consecrated priest, and not the people, can accomplish. In the other portions of the Mass, the

priest and the people commune, but now the priest has entered into the Holy of Holies, where he converses with God alone. (c) The silence is in harmony with the mystery of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Our senses do not reveal to us the accomplishment of the mystery; our mind does not understand it. There are miracles in the Host as numerous as stars, but we see not one external trace of them. This silence recalls to us the hidden nature and the sublime depth of the Mysteries of the Altar, which we accept by faith alone. (d) The silence prompts us to honor, adore and offer the Sublime Sacrifice with the priest. Silence in this case is like a clear voice urging us to enter into our own hearts, there to adore and meditate. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Habacuc 2:20). (e) In the garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, some of our Lord's prayers were audible and some silent. So it is proper that both secret and audible prayers be used at the altar, where the priest, the visible representative of Christ, is renewing Christ's sacrifice. (f) This solemn silence has liturgical precedent. On the Day of Atonement, while the Jewish highpriest offered incense to God on the golden altar, a deep silence hung over the entire Temple, and all the people said their prayers in secret.

This lesson will discuss that part of the Canon preceding the words of Consecration which consists of: (1) the "Te igitur," which asks God through Christ to receive and bless our offerings; (2) the diptychs — prayers for the Church, prayers for the living and prayers of remembrance of the saints; (3) the two immediate prayers of offering in preparation for the Consecration: the "Hanc igitur" and the "Quam oblationem." Locate these three divisions in your Missal before going on with this lesson.

"Te igitur" — "Wherefore we . . . beseech Thee to receive and bless"

The actions of the priest throughout these silent prayers are a means of showing the divine conversation now taking place at the altar. The priest bends low at the beginning of the "Te igitur," with his hands resting upon the altar. When he says "petimus" ("we beseech"), he kisses the altar. At the words "these gifts, these offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices," he stands erect and makes the outline of the cross three times over host and chalice. By this triple cross he shows that Christ's sacrifice on the cross secured for us the blessing of the three Divine Persons of the Trinity. The origin of this triple blessing was the very ancient custom of placing the hosts for Communion in two portions, one on each side of the large host, and then blessing the three.

The word "igitur" ("wherefore" or "therefore") shows how intimately the Canon is connected with the Preface and the Offertory. We have presented thanksgiving, praise and honor to Thee, O merciful Father: we *therefore* bring to Thee our petition. The "Te igitur" introduces the specific petitions for the Church and for the living, and the remembrance of the saints.

"We offer to Thee for Thy Holy Catholic Church"

These commemorations which follow are called "diptychs" because in the early Church the names of the persons to be remembered were read from folding tablets (diptychs) of wood, metal or ivory. The first diptych, contained in the body of the "Te igitur," is a prayer for the shepherds and flock of the Church Militant. Thus every member of the Church is made the beneficiary of every Mass that is offered to God. This prayer is beautiful in its simplicity and its scope: it lifts us above the small petitions of our individual wants and unites us in a grand prayer for all the members of Christ's Mystical Body. In it we pray for the visible Head of the Church on earth, the Shepherd of all our souls, the Pope, who is mentioned by name. We pray by name for the bishop of our diocese, who shares this task with the Pope and is the immediate pastor of our part of the world. When the Holy Father celebrates the sacrifice, he says: ". . . me, Thy unworthy servant, whom Thou hast wished to preside over Thy flock." In Rome, no bishop's name is said after the Pope's, for, as you know from your catechism, the Pope is Bishop of Rome. When the bishop says Mass, instead of mentioning his own name, he says: ". . . and me, Thy unworthy servant." We also pray for all true believers — those who profess the Catholic and Apostolic Faith, who with the Pope and the bishop carry the splendid burden of our Church's unity. We pray for the chief needs of the Church; peace, protection, unity and guidance.

This petition is like the quickening prayer which Jesus said for His disciples after the Last Supper. Read this prayer in the seventeenth chapter of Saint John's Gospel.

The priest holds his hands open and wide apart in a gesture of solemn and profound prayer during this diptych.

"Memento" — "Be mindful, O Lord"

There next follows a memento for the living members of the Church which begins: "Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants and handmaids. . . ." When he says these opening words, the priest slowly moves his hands from their outstretched position, and joining them, he stops in brief meditation over the names of those for whom he intends to pray in particular. It was formerly the custom to read from the diptychs the names of all those who were entitled to special mention. At a Solemn High Mass this was done by the deacon from the ambo or from the altar steps. In a Low Mass the priest himself turned to the congregation at this point and read the names. This custom lasted until the eleventh century. Now the priest simply pronounces the names to himself, or mentally recalls them.

It is natural for us to think of our friends and their needs at this time. Our Lord said: "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7). He is soon to come down upon the altar in our very midst; and just as people would approach Him to plead for themselves or their friends when He passed by on the roads of Palestine, so we go to Him now, the Lord of infinite mercy, at the altar of sacrifice. We believe with all our hearts that this same Christ of the fields and roads of Palestine comes to us in the Mass. Thus we ask Him with confidence and love for the graces we require and also for the needs of our relatives and friends.

The celebrant now goes on to pray in a particular way for those present at the Mass. The Latin phrase "et omnium circumstantium" brings out an interesting fact about the early Christians at Mass. The literal meaning of this phrase is: "those standing around (the altar)." As we have brought out before in this study, our Christian forefathers had a feeling of rare intimacy regarding the Mass. They felt themselves a coöperating part of the action, as of course they were, and as we are today. The altar was usually in the center of the church, and the people circled around it so that they might follow every word and ceremony with all their attention. By their bodily dispositions and their prayers they offered the sacrifice with the priest.

Examine this prayer and discover how well it describes the nature and efficacy of the sacrifice.

The Commemoration of the Saints

The priest, in the same position, now recites the third prayer of remembrance before the Consecration: the Communicantes, which commemorates the Blessed Mother and the saints. The King of Glory comes to us at the Consecration. Therefore, we now unite our prayers with the members of the Church Triumphant, so that with the help of their merits we may in all things be defended by God through Jesus Christ. This is a comforting prayer, for it affirms our protective unity with the Church Triumphant, and our oneness with each other here in the Church Militant. This is the doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

Structure and Variations

The commemoration of the saints is divided into five parts, commemorating: (1) the Blessed Mother of God; (2) twelve Apostles; (3) five of the Popes; (4) seven martyrs especially venerated in Rome; and (5) all the saints. This prayer remains the same throughout the year except that a clause is changed to commemorate, respectively, Christmas and its octave, the feast of Epiphany, Holy Thursday, Easter- and Whitsun-tide (Pentecost), and the Ascension. These variable versions of the Communicantes are found after the Proper Prefaces in the Missal. It is important to refer to them in order to notice the part which is changed.

The Mother of Our God

The Blessed Virgin is mentioned first because she is the Queen of all the Apostles, martyrs and saints. Mary is not simply named, but she is spoken of with profound solemnity in order to stress her greatness, her power and her dignity. The two titles of "ever a Virgin" and "Mother of our God" echo over and over in every Mass down the ages, like great waves against an eternal shore.

She is Queen of Martyrs, for she shared in her heart the pain suffered by her Divine Son. The remembrance of Mary is inseparable from the Sacrifice of Christ. She was part of the life of our Blessed Saviour from the crib to the cross, and she is the first of all those in heaven whom we commemorate when we take our part in the renewal of her Son's sacrifice.

The Apostles

Next follow the names of the Apostles. There are twelve names in all: Saint Paul is listed instead of Judas, and Saint Barnabas and Saint Matthias, who were added to the Apostolic College after the Ascension, are omitted. This preserves the traditional number of twelve in the liturgy at this point, and also keeps the names of Saint Peter and Saint Paul united. They are always united in the Roman rite, for Rome was consecrated by the blood of these two Princes of Holy Church. The names of Saints Barnabas and Matthias do appear, however, in the "Nobis quoque" after the Consecration. Refer to this prayer in your Missal.

The Popes

Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus and Cornelius are the names of the Popes commemorated in this prayer. Linus, Cletus and Clement were the first three successors of Saint Peter. Saint Sixtus was put to death in the middle of the third century. Saint Cornelius belonged to an old Roman family, and was martyred in the middle of the third century.

Martyrs Especially Venerated in Rome

This group opens with the name of Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, and first African bishop to receive the crown of martyrdom. Saint Lawrence was a Roman deacon. The other five, Saints Chrysogonus, John, Paul, Cosmas and Damian, were laymen.

The great antiquity of the Canon is reflected in the fact that no saints who have lived since the fourth century are listed in it. We learn from the choice of names in it that the veneration of the early Church was given almost entirely to martyrs. Because of the persecutions then prevailing, special honor was paid to that mark of sanctity which consisted in shedding one's blood for the Faith of Christ. As the persecutions ceased, honor began to be paid also to the heroes of holiness who achieved bloodless martyrdom by sacrificing themselves in lives lived only for God.

First Offering Prayer of the Canon

The three prayers of remembrance which we have mentioned pave the way for the two offering prayers which immediately precede the solemn moment of Consecration: (1) the "Hanc igitur" and (2) the "Quam oblationem."

The ceremonies of the "Hanc igitur" are revealing. The priest has joined his hands at the close of the Communicantes. Now he spreads them over the chalice and host with palms downward and thumbs united in the form of a cross. In the Old Law, the highpriest placed his hands on the head of the animal to show that the sins of the people had been transferred to the victim of the sacrifice. At the altar the priest, and with him the people, symbolically transfer their guilt to the bread and wine which will soon become the Body and Blood of Christ. He truly takes upon Himself the burden of our sins, appeases God's just wrath, saves us from hell, and opens to us the gates to heaven.

Before 600 A. D., 38 variations of the "Hanc igitur" were in use, but Pope Saint Gregory the Great merged them all into a single petition. This was the last marked change in the Canon. On Holy Thursday, Easter, Pentecost, and in the Mass for the consecration of a bishop, the prayer varies slightly. Saint Gregory added the petitions for peace, deliverance from damnation and admission among the elect in heaven, at the close of this prayer. It is said that the threat of war with barbarians led Saint Gregory to make this particular addition.

Second Offering Prayer of the Canon

The "Quam oblationem" is the last offering prayer before the Consecration and in it we ask God once more that the offering may receive His blessing and be acceptable to Him. Suiting action to words, the priest again blesses the bread and wine, so soon to be transformed into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. A cross is traced five times over the offerings: three times in rapid succession over both bread and wine, and once over each element separately. The altar-boy now rings the bell as a signal that the time of Consecration is at hand.

Our last prayer before the Consecration is that the offering of the priest and the faithful, who are united with all the members of the Church on earth and in heaven, may be blessed, approved, ratified and made worthy and acceptable, so that it may become the Body and Blood of the Son of God.

Divisions of the Canon up to the Consecration

The right-hand column contains paraphrases summarizing the actual prayers.

Thanksgiving:	The Preface.
Remembrance:	The Church Militant. Its living heads. "God, receive and bless these gifts . . . grant peace, protect, unite, and govern the Church for which we offer them."

Remembrance:	The living members of the Church Militant. "Remember, Lord, all present and those dear to them, for whose salvation this sacrifice of praise is offered."
Remembrance:	The Church Triumphant in heaven. "Through the merits and prayers of the Virgin Mary, the Apostles and Martyrs, and all the Saints, may we be defended in all things through Christ our Lord."
Offering:	"Hanc igitur . . . " "Therefore, accept this offering and give us peace, deliverance from hell, and election to Thy flock in heaven."
Offering:	"Quam oblationem . . . " "May our offering be blessed, ratified, approved, and made worthy and acceptable: that it may become the Body and Blood of Thy Son, Jesus Christ."

Discussion Aids:

1. What must be kept in mind regarding the Canon? What is another noteworthy feature of the Canon? What does Saint Thomas say of the use of the cross in the celebration of Mass? Why does a deep silence prevail after the introductory Preface? How has the Church preserved this custom? What does this silence indicate? How is this silence in harmony with the Eucharistic Sacrifice? What are other reasons for this silence? What prayers of the Canon precede the "Te igitur"?

2. What are the actions of the celebrant during the *"Te igitur"?* Why does he make the outline of the cross three times? What is the origin of this triple blessing? What does the word "igitur" show? What does the "Te igitur" introduce?
3. What are the diptychs? For what is the first diptych of the "Te igitur" offered? for whom? How does this prayer change when a bishop says Mass? What is the action of the celebrant?
4. What is the *memento* for the living? What is the action of the celebrant during the memento? For what do we ask in this memento? Why did the early Christians have a feeling of rare intimacy regarding the Mass?
5. What is *the Commemoration of the Saints?* Why is it a comforting prayer? Into what five parts is it divided? Why does it vary on six occasions? Why is the Blessed Virgin mentioned first? What two titles refer to her? Why is remembrance of Mary inseparable from the sacrifice of Christ? How is the traditional number of twelve Apostles preserved in the Commemoration of Saints?
6. Which *Popes* are commemorated in this prayer? Who were they? What martyrs are especially venerated? Who was Saint Cyprian? Who were the other five martyrs? How is the great antiquity of the Canon established? Why is special veneration given to martyrs?
7. What is the action of the priest during the *first offering prayer of the Canon?* Why did the priest of the Old Law place his hands on the head of the victim to be sacrificed? What action of the Mass recalls this custom? When was the last marked change of the Canon made? What did Saint Gregory add at the close of this prayer?
8. What is the *second offering prayer of the Canon?* What is asked in this prayer? Why is a bell rung? What is the purpose of this prayer?
9. What are *the divisions of the Canon up to the Consecration?*

Religious Practices:

1. Unite with the faithful in the "Te igitur" and pray for all members of Christ's Mystical Body.
2. At Mass reflect upon the meaning of the prayers you are studying.

Unit Four

LESSON XX

THE CONSECRATION

WE ARE now at the very heart of the Canon of the Mass. Obedient to our Divine Saviour's command, the celebrant reënacts the events of the Last Supper. All that has passed in the Mass thus far has been a preparation for this. The prayers at the foot of the altar, the praises of the Gloria, the readings from Scripture, the public profession of our faith in the Creed, the prayers by which we offer ourselves with the elements of sacrifice, and the remembrances of the Church, the living and the saints — all have brought our hearts into harmony with the solemn event which is about to take place on the altar.

Quiet has fallen upon the church. The priest's lips move quietly, for his prayers now are recited in a whisper. His silence at the altar reminds us of the terrible loneliness of Jesus on the cross. All this helps us to remember what we have learned so often before, that the sacrifice that is offered on the altar is the same sacrifice that was offered on Calvary: it has the same Priest, and the same Victim.

Transubstantiation

The word which theologians have adopted to describe the change from lowly bread and wine to the Divine Body and Blood of the Son of God is "transubstantiation." It means that the whole substance of the bread is changed into the substance of the Body of Christ, our Lord, and the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His Blood. The Fathers of the Council of Trent, giving an official and authentic explanation of the doctrine of the Church, said: "Before the Consecration, we confess it sincerely, there is but bread and wine, formed by nature; but after the Consecration, there is the Flesh and Blood of Christ, consecrated by our blessing"; and: "The body assumed by our Lord has not come down from heaven, but the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ."

The substance of the bread is changed into the Body of Christ, and the substance of the wine is changed into His Blood. However, since our Lord cannot die again, His Body and Blood are not separated: this would produce death. Because our Lord is living in glory, both His Body and His Blood are present under each of the consecrated elements.

The separate consecration of the two elements represents the separation of our Lord's Blood from His Body which took place on the cross and caused His physical death. The Sacrifice of Calvary is thus renewed upon the altar, in a manner real but bloodless. The Mass is, as we have already learned, a true sacrifice in which the same Victim as that of the cross is offered to God.

The Words of Consecration

The actual words of consecration are:

> "For this is My Body."
> "For this is the chalice of My Blood."

With these words the transubstantiation is accomplished. But before these words are said, there are other phrases of the Consecration liturgy, and accompanying actions of the priest, which deserve our consideration.

Consecration of the Bread

> "Who the day before He suffered. . . ."

These words are not from the Bible, but were added in the early days of the Church by the Supreme Pontiffs.

> "Took bread into His holy and venerable hands. . . . "

At these words the priest takes the host into his hands. The words "took bread" are given in the Gospel narrative, but the rest are not.

> "And with His eyes lifted up to heaven, unto Thee, God, His almighty Father. . . . "

The priest here raises his eyes to heaven. These words likewise are not part of the narrative of the Last Supper; however, they were added because on so many recorded occasions when Jesus was about to accomplish any solemn act, He looked up to heaven. He did so when He performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Matthew 14:19), and when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:41). It has been a tradition that He raised His eyes to heaven at the Last Supper.

> "Giving thanks to Thee, He blessed. . . . "

The priest bends his head to signify the sentiments of thanks which were our Lord's at this time, and taking the host in his left hand, he makes a cross over it with his right. Probably our Lord did not trace a cross when He blessed the bread, since the cross had not yet received its efficacy.

> "Broke and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this for this is My Body."

These words are reproduced in the main from the Scriptural account. The priest pronounces them in a low voice, as he bends down over the bread. Once they have been said, bread is no longer present on the altar, but in its place, under the appearances of bread, is the Body of our Lord.

To adore our Blessed Lord, the priest genuflects devoutly the moment he has said the sacred words. He then raises the Host on high for the adoration of the people, holding it with the thumb and first finger of each hand. Next he places the Host on the corporal. Thereafter he keeps the thumb and first finger of each hand joined together and does not separate them until the Communion is over, except when touching the Host. He kneels again to adore. The server rings the small bell three times during these actions. In the Middle Ages it was the custom to ring the bell in the steeple during the Consecration, and all not present at that particular Mass who heard it would suspend their occupations and pray.

The Great Elevation of the Sacred Species was first introduced as a protest against the heretics who denied the Real Presence. At first the Chalice was not elevated, but only the Host. This elevation of the Host was introduced into the entire Western Church in the thirteenth century as part of the liturgy, by Pope Saint Gregory X. Before this the only elevation was the Minor Elevation which still occurs before the Pater Noster.

The priest is forbidden to add any words or thoughts of private devotion during the Consecration. The people should follow the same law, except for the worthy ejaculation, "My Lord and my God," which may be made with spiritual profit while the Sacred Host is elevated. The Church has attached to this prayer an indulgence of seven years. A plenary indulgence may be gained once a week by all who attend daily Mass and recite this prayer at the elevation of the Host. They must, of course, conform to the usual conditions for a plenary indulgence.

Consecration of the Wine

After the Consecrated Host has been placed on the corporal, the celebrant removes the pall which has covered the mouth of the chalice since the Offertory, and rests it against the altar card. He now continues the scene of the Last Supper.

The actions and words of the consecration of the bread and that of the wine are almost alike. The priest still holds the first finger and thumb of each hand together.

> "In like manner, after He had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands. . . ."

At these words the priest, imitating our Lord's action, takes the chalice into his two hands.

> "Also giving thanks to Thee. . . . "

Here he bows, in the gesture of giving thanks to God.

> "He blessed, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take, and drink ye all of this: for this is the chalice of My Blood, of the New and Eternal Testament: the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins."

He now rests the Chalice on the corporal, and proceeds to genuflect, elevate the Chalice and genuflect again, as before.

Two phrases used in the consecration of the wine, and one used immediately afterward, have a deep meaning, worthy of study.

"Of the . . . Eternal Testament"

These words are not in the Gospel account, but most authorities agree that they were added to the Consecration by the Apostles in order to proclaim that the sacred Priesthood of our Divine Saviour would continue forever in fulfilment of the prophecy: "Thou art a Priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." By contrast, this phrase reminds us of the Old Testament, which was ratified by the blood of animals, and possessed only the imperfect sacrifices which we have already studied. Now that the Perfect Sacrifice is here, it is to continue for all time.

"The Mystery of Faith"

The phrase, "the mystery of faith," is an interesting and appropriate addition to the words of the Bible narrative. As we know, the catechumens were excluded from the Mass of the Faithful: the faithful were reminded by this phrase that only those who had been baptized could share the mysteries of faith. The Holy Eucharist is called the "mystery of faith" because its real greatness is hidden from the senses. We have nothing in our material makeup by which to observe or judge the remarkable change which has been accomplished. Pure faith alone enables us to accept the wonder which has been wrought before us. Saint

Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, has expressed this thought effectively and beautifully in his "Lauda Sion," the Sequence sung on the feast of Corpus Christi:

"Hear what Holy Church maintaineth,
That the bread its substance changeth
Into Flesh, the wine to Blood.
Doth it pass thy comprehending?
Faith, the law of sight transcending,
Leaps to things not understood.

"Here beneath these signs are hidden
Priceless things, to sense forbidden ;
Signs, not things, are all we see:
Flesh from bread, and Blood from wine,
Yet is Christ in either sign,
All entire, confessed to be."

"The mystery of faith" is that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, becomes present under the appearances of bread and wine in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This is a necessary part of every Catholic's belief. For a thousand years of our Church's history no heretic ever denied it. In later centuries people wandered from the teachings of Jesus Christ and challenged this "mystery of faith." But the true Catholic accepts this mystery as unhesitatingly as he does the fact that summer comes, the sun shines and birds sing.

"As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me"

The priest, as he puts the Chalice down, genuflects and then elevates it, saying these words. They are the last words of the Consecration and they are our authority for the solemn event which has been accomplished on the altar. Christ spoke these words to His Apostles in the Upper Room, and they constituted His command that the Sacrifice of the Cross was to be repeated forever. By these words He instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders, ordaining the Apostles His first priests.

Offering of the Victim to God

Essentially, the Eucharistic Sacrifice has been accomplished by the Consecration. But as the action was properly introduced and made ready with many prayers and ceremonies, so it must now be worthily concluded. The Church has developed a wealth of prayers and ceremonies with which to honor the Presence of Christ on the altar, and to gather up and use for the good of all the faithful the rich graces which have been made available to her by the Eucharistic Consecration.

The "Unde et memores" is a great prayer and worthy of careful scrutiny. The priest recites it with hands extended as when he recites the Collects, except that the thumb and first finger are still pressed together.

In this prayer we are called the servants of God. As His creatures we are bound to serve and obey our Creator. The prayer also refers to us as His holy people, which we truly are, because by offering with Christ the Sacrifice of Redemption we are made to share in God's infinitely perfect life. The phrase also emphasizes the collective character of the Mass. This beautiful and sublime prayer, referring to our part in the sacrifice which has just taken place, should give us a sense of our spiritual dignity which will lift us above the troubles and the fears of the day. It should make us realize the obligations of our supernatural aristocracy and, like the Christians of the Catacombs, resolve rather to die than to give up one single duty or privilege of our high estate.

Refer to the "Unde et memores" and note the words by which we recall the Passion of Christ, His Resurrection and His Ascension. Of all our Lord's life, these three events are those most closely connected with our redemption.

The priest, tracing a cross five times over the Sacred Offerings, refers to them as "a pure Victim, a holy Victim, a spotless Victim, the holy Bread of eternal life, and the Chalice of everlasting salvation." Each of these phrases brings out some important point about the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The three adjectives used to characterize the Victim remind us of the prophecy of Malachias. The two other phrases point out more explicitly the redemptive value of the sacrifice by which we are allowed to share eternal life.

In your Missal notice the words which occur where the five crosses are traced, three times over the Host and Chalice together, and once over each of them separately. These marks of the cross cannot be blessings, because neither Host nor Chalice needs a blessing now. We must therefore explain them mystically. Saint Thomas says that they are a memorial of the Passion, recalling the Five Wounds. In a word, the crosses made before the Consecration are blessings in reality, but those after the Consecration symbolize the blessed Victim Who, having once suffered on the cross, is now lying before us on the altar of unbloody sacrifice.

Now that we have reached the sublime climax of the Mass, it might be well to give a sweeping survey. (1) From the Offertory, which opens the Mass of the Faithful, the priest and the people, in union with our Divine Lord, have offered prayer and sacrifice to Almighty God. (2) At the Consecration the sacrificial elements of bread and wine have become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. (3) In the "Unde et memores," the priest and the people offer this Divine Body and Blood, the perfect Sacrifice, to God for the souls of men.

Our next lesson will consider the divisions of the Canon which follow the Consecration: two offering prayers, three prayers of remembrance and a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. An excellent preparation would be to find each of these divisions and to read them while the words and ceremonies of the Consecration are still ringing in your heart.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why does the celebrant now reënact the events of the Last Supper? How has the Mass thus far been a preparation for this? Why does quiet fall upon the church?
2. What is *transubstantiation?* What does it mean? What is the official and authentic explanation of this doctrine? Why are Christ's Body and Blood present under each species? Why is there a separate consecration of bread and wine?

3. What are the actual *words of Consecration?* What words precede the consecration of the bread? What are the actions of the celebrant? Why does the celebrant raise his eyes to heaven? bend his head? What words are then pronounced in a low voice? How does the celebrant then adore our Lord? How do the people adore Christ? What actions of the priest follow? When was the Great Elevation of the Host introduced in the Western Church? the Minor Elevation?
4. How is the scene of the Last Supper continued in the *consecration of the wine,* in words? in actions? What is the meaning of the phrase, "of the . . . Eternal Testament"? When was it probably added? Why? By contrast, of what does this phrase remind us?
5. What is the significance of the phrase *"the mystery of faith"?* How has Thomas Aquinas shown that faith alone enables us to accept this mystery? What is the "mystery of faith"? Why does the true Catholic accept this mystery unhesitatingly?
6. What words are our authority for the Holy Sacrifice? What command do they give? What sacrament was instituted as they were pronounced?
7. What actions follow the *offering of the Victim to God?* Why has the Church developed concluding prayers and ceremonies? Why is the "Unde et memores" worthy of careful scrutiny? How does this prayer refer to us? to our part in the sacrifice? to the sacred Victim? Briefly, survey the Mass of the Faithful through the Consecration.

Religious Practices:

1. Consider the collective nature of the Mass. Unite in offering it and coöperate with the grace obtained through assisting.
2. Unite worthily in the Holy Sacrifice that it may lift you above the fears of the day to the joy of union with Christ.

Unit Four

LESSON XXI

PRAYERS AFTER THE CONSECRATION

BY THE sublime act of Consecration, the bread and wine have become the Body and Blood of the Son of God. It is now possible for us to offer a truly acceptable sacrifice to God. The remainder of the Canon goes on, therefore, to render to Him the worship of praise, thanksgiving, satisfaction and petition in union with the Divine Victim.

In an early lesson we mentioned two characteristics of each sacrifice of the Old Law: (1) man's desire for the friendship of God; (2) God's comforting sign, or answer, to man's expression of this desire through sacrifice. Now that we have the perfect sacrifice, the same thing must be true: and it serves to bring out the important point that in this offering we must have an active part. We cannot stand passively by, complacent in the thought that restitution has been made by the divine charity of God's own Son. God, by a miracle of divine love, has permitted us to include ourselves in the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass. He could have allowed each of us to offer worship only through and with the one bloody Sacrifice on Calvary so many years ago; but He chose instead to have this sacrifice renewed and continued on the altar in Holy Mass, so that we are never without the means of offering Him perfect worship.

Christ has come down upon the altar as the Victim of sacrifice in our place and for our sins. He has done this in order that we may offer ourselves with Him. He will take our sacrifice of self and, making it part of His sacrifice, offer it to Almighty God, Whom we were born to worship. As many grains of wheat were united to make the one host, as many grapes have contributed to fill the chalice, so all the faithful unite in the sacrifice of Christ to make one great and acceptable sacrifice.

Our gifts of bread and wine have now been changed into the real Body and Blood of Christ. Because they are signs of ourselves, we now offer ourselves as a worthy sacrifice to our Creator in, with and through Christ. In the prayers after the Consecration we voice these thoughts, and implore the Father to accept from our unworthy hands the Body and Blood of His Divine Son in acknowledgment of our worship of Him.

Divisions after the Consecration

Hence the prayers we will now study reveal more clearly the priestly act of Christ, and proclaim that the Church makes the sacrificial act her own and offers it to God for the purpose of worship.

The words, "As often as ye shall do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me," and the prayer beginning, "Wherefore, O Lord, we Thy servants, and likewise Thy holy people. . . ," though they were treated with the Consecration because of their close connection with it, are united in meaning just as closely with the prayers of this lesson. It would therefore be well at this time to re-read the entire portion of the Canon devoted to the Consecration through the "Unde et memores."

We will now study (1) the "Supra quae" (offering), (2) the "Supplices te rogamus" (offering), (3) the "Memento" (remembrance), (4) the "Nobis quoque peccatoribus" (remembrance), (5) the "Per quem haec omnia" (remembrance), and (6) the "Per ipsum et cum ipso" or Minor Elevation (thanksgiving). The words in parentheses will help you to see the balancing of these prayers and those which precede the Consecration. (Consult the outline on pages 175, 176.)

"Supra quae . . ." — "Upon which . . ."

With his hands outstretched, the priest says the prayer beginning "Supra quae . . .":

> "Upon which do Thou vouchsafe to look with a propitious and serene countenance, and to accept them, as Thou wast graciously pleased to accept the gifts of Thy just servant Abel, and the sacrifice of our patriarch Abraham, and that which Thy highpriest Melchisedech offered to Thee, a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim."

This beautiful prayer, as we see, recommends our offering to God by recalling the sacrifices of the Old Law which proved pleasing to Him. The names mentioned are especially significant at this time in the Mass. Abel comes to the altar with the lamb, the first fruits of his flock. Abraham brings his son Isaac. To refer to him as a "patriarch" emphasizes the fact that both he and his son were the ancestors of our Divine Lord. Melchisedech brings the bread and wine. Each reference has its parallel in the actuality of the Mass: Christ is the Lamb of the Everlasting Sacrifice; He is also the Son, both by the race of Abraham and by the eternal generation of the Divine Father; under the appearances of the bread and wine of Melchisedech this Lamb of the New Testament is offered.

The mention of these three sacrifices has other implications of importance. The blood of the just Abel was shed by his brother Cain — and this reminds us of the wickedness of the Jews in shedding the blood of the innocent Christ, Who in His human nature was their kinsman. Abel prefigures our Lord in offering the firstlings of his flock, for Christ, as Saint Paul states, was "the Firstborn among many brethren." Abraham brought his only son Isaac to the hill, there to offer him to God. In this he prefigured the Eternal Father offering His only Son for the sake of mankind. Isaac carrying the wood upon which he was to be immolated, suggests our Saviour carrying His cross to the hill of Calvary. Abraham's sacrifice did not go as far as the shedding of Isaac's blood, but it was accepted by God. This is a perfect figure of the Sacrifice of the Mass, because the Victim is not physically slain — the Risen Christ cannot suffer and die again. The mysterious figure of Melchisedech is mentioned in Sacred Scripture as a priest of the Most High; and as Saint Paul points out (Hebrews 7:3), nowhere is there record of his father or mother or genealogy, the beginning or end of his days. Thus Melchisedech presents an arresting figure of our Divine Lord, the Eternal Son of God, Who is immolated in the Mass. For of Christ it is asked: "Who shall declare His generation?" (Acts 8:33). Finally, Melchisedech was both king and priest: Jesus is King and Priest also. Melchisedech's sacrifice was one of thanksgiving: the Mass is the Supreme Act of thanksgiving.

In the few words of the "Supra quae" the relation between the sacrifice of the Old Law and the Sacrifice of the New is expressed. The true religion extends from figure to reality. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the culmination of man's hope. In it, by God's love, the best that man can offer in worship of God, God receives with "a propitious and serene countenance."

The "Supra quae" points out that a sacrifice can only obtain its effects if it be accepted by the one to whom it is offered. These sacrifices of the Old Law, which prefigured those of the New, proved acceptable to God. Most assuredly, then, God will look with a serene countenance upon our Sacrifice, for it is the Body and Blood of His own Son.

"Supplices te rogamus" — "We most humbly beseech Thee"

The priest now begins another prayer of offering, during the first part of which he bows low and places his hands on the altar.

> "We most humbly beseech Thee, almighty God, to command that these things be borne by the hands of Thy holy angel to Thine altar on high, in the sight of Thy divine majesty, that as many of us as at this altar shall partake of and receive the most holy Body and Blood of Thy Son, may be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen."

At the words, "at this altar shall partake," he kisses the altar, then stands erect. He traces the cross over the Host and the Chalice, after which he blesses himself at the words "with every heavenly blessing and grace."

This beautiful prayer calls to mind the fact that the Victim sacrificed upon the altar in our churches is the Lamb Who is "sacrificed" in heaven. Now in undying glory our Lord displays His glorious wounds upon the altar before the throne of God, where He offers His past merits and unending intercession for the human race. The figurative language of this prayer seems to have been inspired by the vision of Saint John as related in the Apocalypse (8:3, 4):

"And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he might offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne. And with the prayers of the saints there went up before God from the angel's hand the smoke of the incense."

This prayer, "Supplices te rogamus," is a profound utterance and not every part of it is easily understood. Though some interpret it to mean that the angels assist at Mass, it may also be interpreted of Christ Himself. He is God's Envoy and the Divine Prince of all the heavenly host. He is called the Angel of the Great Council, and the Angel of the Testament. Our Lord Himself, accompanied by legions of angels, presents our offering to God. He is the Eternal Highpriest, ever before the throne of God: "He lives always to make intercession" for us (Hebrews 7:25).

The last part of the prayer asks that after God has accepted our offering, we may receive Christ in return in Communion, that we may participate at the altar and thus be filled with every heavenly blessing and grace.

The purpose of the "Supplices," then, is to ask that the Body and Blood of Christ, our sacrifice, may be united to and offered with that unending offering of Himself which Christ makes in heaven and by which He ratifies forever the actual offering of Himself accomplished on the altar of the Cross.

The Reading of the Diptychs

Here the Canon is interrupted by three prayers of remembrance, or intercession, similar to the three petitions which preceded it: (1) a memorial for the dead, the Church Suffering, (2) a remembrance of the sinners of the Church Militant, (3) a remembrance of all nature, expressed by means of a blessing.

"Memento etiam, Domine": This is a beautiful and consoling prayer, asking God to be mindful of those who have gone on before us with the sign of faith. It gives us the quiet and hopeful fragrance of the ancient days of the Catacombs. The early Christians called the place of burial a place of sleep: in fact, our word "cemetery" means the same thing. Here the body is laid for a little while, to rest through the night of time, until the angel's mighty trumpet is sounded, signaling the sleepers to arise. If we die in the friendship of Christ, death is "a sleep of peace" and heaven "a place of refreshment, light and peace."

The Church has always given generous thought to the souls in purgatory, the members of the Church Suffering. Saint Jerome says: "The souls in purgatory are relieved when the sacrifice is being offered in their behalf." Therefore, in every Mass, no matter for what particular intention it is offered, the celebrant is directed by Holy Mother Church to remember the souls in purgatory.

The prayer brings out strongly the character of the Mass as both satisfaction and petition. As the priest begins the prayer, he brings his hands slowly together so that they will be united at the words "the sleep of peace." Where the letters N. and N. appear in the Missal, the names of the departed persons to be prayed for particularly were read from the folding tablets or diptychs mentioned in an earlier lesson. At present the priest makes a private memento here for some particular soul or souls. At this pause, we should follow the celebrant's example and remember our friends and relatives who "sleep the sleep of peace." In our charity we should also remember all the souls in purgatory, some of whom may be abandoned and forgotten. That we do in the last part of the prayer.

"Nobis quoque peccatoribus": After petitioning for eternal bliss for the faithful departed, we ask that we too may receive the same happiness when we die:

> "To us sinners, also, Thy servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy Apostles and martyrs: with John, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, Anastasia, and with all Thy saints, into whose company we pray Thee admit us, not considering our merit, but of Thine own free pardon. Through Christ our Lord."

We are sinners, but yet we are the servants of God, and hope to have a part and fellowship with the saints, the glorious company of the Church Triumphant.

At the first words of this prayer the celebrant breaks the solemn silence of the Canon for the first time by pronouncing the words, "To us sinners also," in an audible voice. At the same time he strikes his breast in humility, as did the poor publican when he went up to the temple to pray.

The saints mentioned in this prayer relate it most closely to the Communicantes said before the Consecration. This contributes to the perfect balance of the Canon. Saint John the Baptist is mentioned first because Christ called him the greatest among the children of men. Saint Stephen was the first martyr of the New Law. He prayed with his dying voice that the grace of Christ would be given to his executioners, one of whom was a young man named Saul. Saint Matthias, who was chosen to replace Judas among the Apostles, and Saint Barnabas, who was appointed an Apostle after our Lord's death, were not mentioned in the Communicantes, but receive their place now. Saint Ignatius was an early martyr who was condemned to the wild beasts. He left magnificent letters on the love of Christ. Saint Alexander was an early Pope, and is said to have prescribed that water be mixed with the wine in the Mass to symbolize the blood and water which came from the wound in Jesus' side. The seven women martyrs mentioned after Saints Peter and Marcellinus are among the most renowned in the Church's history.

"Per quem haec omnia": The third prayer of remembrance

after the Consecration would seem to have little connection with the preceding two:

> "Through Whom, O Lord, Thou dost create, hallow, quicken, and bless these Thine ever-bountiful gifts and give them to us."

Early customs shed some light upon the purpose of this prayer, showing that it is actually a remembrance of all nature. Formerly the offerings used at the agape, or brotherly meal which followed the Mass, were blessed at this point. Products of nature such as grapes, milk, honey, oil and wine, which had been placed on the altar to be given to the poor, were also blessed at this time, as were the beans to be distributed on Ascension Day, the grapes for the Feast of Saint Sixtus and the milk and honey for the newly baptized on Easter and Whitsunday. Because man used these things in the worship of God, they were worthy of being blessed at the altar. Although today the products are not physically present, God's gifts are still blessed in the "Per quem," and our spirit of thanksgiving extends its boundaries to include all nature in the great Sacrifice of the Mass.

At the words "sanctify," "quicken" and "bless" in this prayer, a cross is traced over the Host and Chalice.

The "Per Ipsum . . ." or Minor Elevation

The Chalice is then uncovered, the priest takes the Host between the thumb and index finger of his right hand, and makes three crosses with it over the Chalice as he says "through Him, and with Him, and in Him." This indicates that the Blood in the Chalice flowed from the Sacred Body which is held over it. He makes two crosses between the Chalice and himself in a direct line at the phrase: "Unto Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost." When he says "all honor and glory," he raises the Chalice and Host a few inches from the altar. He concludes the prayer with the words "for ever and ever," which are said in a louder voice so that the faithful may ratify the prayers of the Church and answer "Amen." This is all the people say in the Canon. But they say a great deal in that one

Hebrew acclamation: they give testimony to their faith in the Real Presence of Christ on the altar, and to their part in the mystery which has just been enacted.

This Minor Elevation of the Chalice with the Host held over it was the only one in the Sacrifice of the Mass until the thirteenth century, when the Greater Elevation was introduced. The Minor Elevation shows that the praise which has been directed to heaven because of the Sacrifice of Calvary is repeated on the altar. The words of praise and the elevation together constitute a perfect act of worship with which to terminate the Canon. Here ends the first part of the Mass of the Faithful. The sacrificial action proper is ended. Through the Communion we will soon be united with Christ, "the living Bread . . . come down from Heaven."

Discussion Aids:

1. Why may we offer a truly acceptable sacrifice after the Consecration? Why must we have an active part in it? Why does Christ come upon the altar as Victim? What thoughts do we voice in the prayers after the Consecration?
2. What do the *prayers after the Consecration* proclaim? Discuss the meaning of each Latin phrase of the Consecration prayers.
3. How does the prayer *"Supra quae"* recommend our offering to God? Why are the names mentioned especially significant? How does each have its parallel in the actuality of the Mass? What are the implications of the mention of the sacrifice of Abel? Abraham? Melchisedech? What does Saint Paul point out about Melchisedech's genealogy? How does Melchisedech present a figure of our Lord? How is the Mass the culmination of man's hope? How does sacrifice obtain its effects?
4. What is the next prayer of offering? What are the actions of the celebrant during this prayer? What does this prayer call to mind? What probably inspired this prayer? What does the last part of this prayer ask? What is the purpose of the *"Supplices"*?
5. What *diptychs* are read after the Consecration? What do we ask in the memorial for the dead? What does "cemetery" mean? What does Saint Jerome say of the Church Suffering

and the Mass? What does this memorial for the dead bring out? What are the actions of the celebrant? What should be our actions?

6. In what prayer do we ask for happiness after death? How is the Church Triumphant included? Why is Saint John the Baptist mentioned first? What Apostles not previously mentioned in the Communicantes are now named? Who were Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander?
7. What is the third prayer of remembrance after the Consecration? What light do early customs shed upon this prayer?
8. What are the celebrant's actions during the *Minor Elevation?* What prayer is said? How is it concluded? To what do the people give testimony in responding "Amen"? What is the Minor Elevation? What does it show? When is the sacrificial action proper ended?

Religious Practices:

1. Take an active part in the Holy Sacrifice. Through the Communion of Saints unite with the Church Suffering and Triumphant.
2. Pray for the souls in purgatory. Petition the saints for their prayers.

UNIT FIVE:

Mass of the Faithful: Communion, Thanksgiving

LESSON XXII

PREPARING FOR COMMUNION

THE sacrifice has been offered to God. In order to carry out the sacrificial idea completely and perfectly, we must participate in it by adding our Communion to the offering. It is true that the people's Communion is not (like the celebrant's) essential to the Mass, but the Holy Sacrifice cannot take on its fullest possible meaning without their Communion.

The Mass now takes its second direction — that is, from God to man. We are dignified by this sacrament, made worthy of the holy gifts which He bestows upon us; the bonds between the members of the Church are tightened; and the union of all the faithful with God is made stronger, for we communicate with Him at the same feast like members of the same family. What a privilege and responsibility it is to be, as it were, a blood-relation of Divinity! At the Communion of the Mass we are truly invited by God to His table, there to be His guests.

The celebrant's Communion, as we have noted above, is an integral part of the sacrifice; it makes that sacrifice complete. For this reason the celebrant must always receive Communion. Moreover, the Council of Trent expressly states the desire of the Church that the faithful receive Communion sacramentally each time they assist at Mass. Jesus Himself said to His Apostles: "Take and eat; this is My Body. . . . All of you drink of this; for this is My Blood of the New Covenant."

The Eucharist is the great sacrament of unity. Saint Paul writes of it: "The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the sharing of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread that we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord? Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16, 17). Saint Thomas Aquinas, the Angelic Doctor, teaches that the Blessed Sacrament would fail of its chief purpose if those for whose benefit it was instituted did not make use of it in Holy Communion. The perfection of the sacrament is in its actual use. More will be said about the value and importance of Communion in the next lesson.

Communion must be prepared for carefully and sincerely. The priest does this first by reciting the Pater Noster which is a sacramental. When we repeat it with him we ask for our daily bread and for that charity toward both God and our fellow-men which is indispensable if we are to receive our Divine Lord worthily. The preparatory units to be considered in this lesson are (1) the preamble to the Pater Noster, (2) the body, or six petitions, of the Pater Noster, (3) the Embolism, or paraphrase, of the last petition, (4) the Fraction of the Host, and (5) the Agnus Dei.

"Let Us Pray"

With the words, "Let us pray," the preamble to the Our Father simply invites the Christians gathered around the altar to pray, and then goes on to say that Jesus Himself taught the prayer which we will now make bold to say. This preamble, which never varies, gives a special solemnity to the Our Father. Its antiquity is established by the fact that Saint Cyprian, writing in the early part of the third century, strikes the essential note which dominates the preamble as we now have it in the Mass. Read these words of the great martyr-saint and compare them with the preamble in your Missal:

"Among the rest of His salutary admonitions and divine precepts, by which He provides for the well-being of His people, He also gave them a standard of prayer, He Himself teaching us what we should pray for."

The celebrant stands with his hands united while reciting the preamble, but as soon as he begins the first petition of the Our Father, he extends them in the form of a cross, in the posture of the praying figures, called *orantes,* which appear on the walls of the Catacombs.

The Pater Noster — Our Father

The solemn recitation or singing of the Pater Noster almost certainly goes back to Apostolic days. Saint Jerome tells us that Christ Himself told the Apostles to say the Pater Noster during the Sacrifice of the Mass. It is the greatest of all prayers, and its origin is divine. The most complete account, which was the one incorporated in the liturgy, is found in Saint Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount (6:9-13). Saint Luke's version is the one given by our Lord when one of the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray (11:2-4). You should read both these Scriptural accounts. The "Doctrine of the Apostles," a theological text of the first centuries, orders the people of the early Church to say the Our Father three times daily.

Tertullian, a third-century Christian writer, said the following about the Our Father: "It is as brief in words as it is far-reaching in meaning. Besides the adoration of God and the petitions for men which make up the essence of the prayer, it includes the complete summary of the teaching and laws of Jesus Christ, so that it is a kind of summary of the Gospel." In these words we have in brief the value and purpose of the prayer.

Its present location immediately after the Canon is due to Saint Gregory the Great, as we discover from a letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Syracuse in 578: "We say the Lord's Prayer immediately after the Canon; for it was the Apostolic custom to consecrate the sacrifice by pronouncing only the prayer of offering, and it has seemed to me unfitting that we should say over the offering a prayer composed by a writer, no matter who he is, and not say over the Body and Blood of the Redeemer this prayer which He Himself has composed. Amongst the Greeks the prayer is said by all the people, but with us it is said by the celebrant alone."

Previous to the time of Saint Gregory, the Our Father had been said just before the Communion, when the Consecrated Species were removed for distribution. It seems especially appropriate that Saint Gregory saw fit to place the prayer closer to the Consecration and farther from the Communion, because it acts as a seal on the Eucharistic prayer and at the same time provides a complete and inspiring preparation for Communion while the Precious Body and Blood are still on the altar table. We ask for our daily bread — the bread needed for our bodies, and also the spiritual nourishment which we will receive in the Eucharist. We plead for forgiveness of our sins. We pardon all who have injured us. With all this we put on the cloak of charity required for the worthy receiving of the Son of the Living God. The Our Father is truly the "table-prayer" of the family of God.

The Six Petitions

The first three petitions of the Our Father ask that God may be honored and glorified: May His name be reverenced, His kingdom spread, and His holy will be done. The last three petitions concern the needs — chiefly the spiritual needs — of humankind: May we receive our daily sustenance, may our sins be forgiven, and may we be protected from temptations. Some of the Church Fathers have said that the first three pertain to eternity, and the last three only to our life on earth. These petitions are recited or sung by the priest with his eyes fixed upon the Host.

"Our Father": By Baptism we gain the right to call God Father, for by it we become His children. The "our" further emphasizes that we are praying as members of a community in which we are all brothers of and in Christ, having with Him the same Father. In Saint John's Gospel we read these words of our Saviour: "I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God" (20:17).

Meditate a moment on these words and strive to realize what it means to you to have God, the Divine Creator of heaven and earth, for your Father. It means that you have His Son for Brother. It means that you are a member of the family of those radiant beings, the saints. It means that Mary, the beautiful Queen of heaven, is your Mother too.

"Who art in heaven": God is everywhere, but it is in heaven that we shall view the Beatific Vision, the goal of our life here below, and the final end of all Christian hope.

"Hallowed be Thy Name": To praise God is the reason for our existence.

"Thy kingdom come": Here we cry for the time when that praise will be complete and perfect because all men on earth will sing in His honor, participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven": We pray here that some day we who live on earth will be as obedient as the angels in heaven. Christ, our Exemplar, was obedient unto death.

"Give us this day our daily bread": This refers, of course, to our bodily nourishment but even more to the Bread of Life, which is about to be received in Holy Communion. An older translation used the words, "our supersubstantial bread." The merely substantial bread is needed to preserve the life of our bodies, but the bread of the Eucharist preserves our supernatural life.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us": We are all members of one Body about to partake together of the one Bread. Therefore we cannot by any act of hatred or malicious resentment destroy that unity. "Therefore if thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother has anything against thee, leave thy gift before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23, 24).

"And lead us not into temptation": The Christian prays, not that he may entirely be spared the temptations which prove his love for God, but that he may be spared overpowering allurements to sin, and that God's grace and protection may never be withdrawn from him during the assaults against his soul. With

that grace in our hearts we are able to overcome any temptation, even the most severe.

"But deliver us from evil": This petition is said or sung audibly by the choir or the server, representing the people. The priest responds "Amen," which may seem unusual for two reasons: (1) because here the celebrant answers the server; and (2) because though the Pater Noster is said aloud, the Amen is added silently, which is in contradiction to liturgical principle. The explanation is that the prayer is addressed to God, and the priest as God's representative announces in His name that He approves when he says: "Amen" — "So be it."

In this petition we ask to be delivered not only from physical evil, but also, and chiefly, from all things which might endanger our union with Jesus Christ.

"Deliver us, we beseech Thee. . . ."

Actions: The priest now takes the paten from under the corporal, wipes it with the purificator, and holds it in his right hand, edge down, the paten erect on the altar. In a Solemn High Mass the subdeacon carries the paten to the altar, for, as we have seen, he has held it covered with the humeral veil since the Offertory.

The Embolism: Holding the paten as noted above, the priest recites the Embolism. Beginning "Deliver us, we beseech Thee," this prayer develops and interprets or paraphrases the last petition of the Our Father. It is as ancient as the Canon, and receives its name from the Greek word *embolismos,* meaning development. The Embolism is said silently in order to indicate that it is really not a part of the Our Father. However, on Good Friday, during the Mass of the Presanctified, it is recited or sung in the same voice as the Our Father.

As you will see from reading it, the Embolism asks that the Virgin Mary, Saints Peter and Paul, Saint Andrew and all the saints intercede for our peace, freedom from sin and security from disturbance. The peace implored is therefore not only peace of conscience. The phrase "peace in our days" is thought to have been inserted by Pope Saint Gregory the Great because the age in which he lived was so violent and troubled that many thought the end of the world was at hand. But though specific conditions change, there is need in every century to pray for peace.

At the words "Da propitius pacem" ("Mercifully grant peace"), the celebrant makes the Sign of the Cross upon himself with the paten to indicate that these things we request, peace, sinlessness, and security, come from the Cross of Christ. Then after kissing the corner of the paten, he slips the paten under the Sacred Host, uncovers the chalice and genuflects.

The Breaking (Fraction) of the Bread

The Embolism has a rather long conclusion beginning: "Through the same Jesus Christ. . . . " While reciting it the priest, who has taken the Host between the thumb and the index finger of his right hand, holds the Host over the chalice and breaks it into two equal parts. The portion held in the right hand is placed on the paten. The priest breaks a minute particle from the portion he still holds in his left hand, placing the rest of it also on the paten. Holding the small particle over the chalice he recites the rest of the prayer in a loud voice so that the people may answer, through the server, "Amen."

Next the celebrant recites the "Pax Domini" — "The peace of the Lord be always with you"; to which the server responds: "And with thy spirit." Note the three little crosses in this prayer in your Missal. They tell us that at these words the priest makes three crosses over the mouth of the chalice with the fragment of the Host in his right hand. He then lets it fall into the Precious Blood, saying meanwhile the prayer "Haec commixtio" — "May this mingling," etc. In the first nine or ten centuries of the Church, the Pax Domini was the signal for the exchange of the kiss of peace between the members of the congregation. We will discuss this custom in our next lesson.

Origin and Meaning of the Fraction

The Breaking of the Bread, or Fraction, is one of the oldest parts of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and it is found in all liturgies.

Christ Himself commanded the Apostles to repeat what had been done at the Last Supper. There, as we know, He "took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave it to His disciples" (Matthew 26:26); "Having taken bread, He gave thanks and broke" (Luke 22:19). The Acts of the Apostles also uses the expression "breaking of the bread" in this sense of partaking of the Eucharist (2:42, 46; 20: 11). The early Christians are spoken of as "breaking bread in their house." Besides repeating the action of the Last Supper, they had a practical reason for doing so. The bread was brought for the Offertory in small loaves and had to be broken in order to be distributed at Communion.

In the Stational Masses which we have already described, the Fraction was beautifully symbolic of the unity of the Church. We have seen that the Pope was usually the celebrant at the Stational Mass. After the Canon, he began the Fraction of the Bread, which was completed by the assisting clergy. Next the particles were gathered in linen cloths or baskets which the acolytes carried. The Bread for the people's Communion was usually carried in linen bags suspended from the acolytes' necks. To show that there is but one Bread, the Pope placed in the chalice a fragment which had been consecrated at the previous Mass. He also reserved a fragment of the Host consecrated at the present Mass to be placed in the chalice at the following celebration. This fragment was called the *Sancta.* Some fragments of the Bread were set apart to be taken to the priests in distant parishes, and thus they were united in the Eucharist to the Station Mass. The *Sancta* preserved from the previous Mass was carried in procession to the Station Church. Upon reaching the altar the priest adored the Sacred Particle. During the Mass, a cleric stood in the sanctuary and held the *Sancta* in a linen cloth until the Fraction, when It was carried to the altar and dropped in the chalice at the "Haec commixtio." Today at a Solemn High Mass we are reminded of the ceremony by the subdeacon who holds the paten — though without the Host — under the humeral veil from the Offertory until the end of the Our Father.

The breaking of the Host over the Chalice symbolizes that the Precious Blood in the chalice streamed from the broken Body of our Saviour as He died on the cross. The ceremonies of the early Church during the Fraction, the mingling, the kiss of peace, etc., indicate the strong sense of unity which possessed the early Church.

The Mingling of the Consecrated Species

As we have noted, immediately after the prayer for peace and the Fraction, the celebrant drops into the Precious Blood the particle which he broke from the halved Host, reciting at the same time the prayer "Haec commixtio." This prayer dates back about to the tenth century; the only prayer recited in the ancient Church during the Fraction was the Pater Noster. The naming of the Body and Blood in the prayer seems to indicate the time when the people communicated under both species, a custom which declined beginning with the twelfth century, and which was officially discontinued in the universal Church in the fourteenth century.

The mingling of the Consecrated Species is meant to express the truth that in each is present the one Person of Christ, risen and glorified, always living, and always giving life to our souls. As the Fraction of the Host indicates the death of Christ, this mingling symbolizes His eternal life in the glory of the Father.

"Agnus Dei" — "Lamb of God"

Striking his breast in humility three times, the priest next repeats three times the words spoken by Saint John the Baptist when he announced to the Jews that Jesus, Whom he saw approaching, was the Messias of prophecy. The Precursor still carries on his divine mission, for during the Mass he still bears witness to the Lamb of God.

This chant, the Agnus Dei, was introduced by Pope Sergius, who ruled the Church from 687 to 701. First the Agnus Dei was sung alternately by clergy and people during the entire ritual of the breaking of the Body of the Lord. Later (by the twelfth century) it was sung at this point three times, and the third "Have mercy on us" was replaced with the phrase "Grant us peace." In a Mass for the Dead instead of the "Have mercy on us," the plea "Grant them rest" is used, and the third petition is "Grant them rest eternal."

We have in the Agnus Dei another appeal for peace. One thought must remain with us from these constant references to peace: The peace of the liturgy, the peace of Christ, proceeds from the charity which exists among the children of God. The charity in the heart of each Christian produces peace in the family, the school, the community, the nation, and it is also the peace on earth of which the Christmas angels sang on the hills of Bethlehem. No thought could be more valuable to those about to receive Christ, for peace *is* Christ, since He lives in us. Great is the tragedy of the act, word or thought which quenches the flame of Divine Love in our hearts. The dying Franciscan poet Jacopone da Todi cried out: "I weep because Love is not loved." May these lessons help us so that during this preparation for Communion we may always see Christ in others. May we resolve to love Him in His Eucharistic Presence, and also as He lives in the members of His Mystical Body, our fellow-men of the Catholic Church.

Discussion Aids:

1. How do we participate in the Holy Sacrifice completely and perfectly? What direction does the Mass take after the Minor Elevation? Why should the members of the Church communicate with God at the same feast? Why must the celebrant always receive Communion? What does the Council of Trent state regarding Communion of the faithful? What does Saint Paul say of unity in the Sacrament of the Eucharist? Why is the actual use the perfection of the sacrament? How should we prepare for Communion?
2. To what does the *"Let us pray"* before the Our Father invite us? How is the antiquity of this phrase established?
3. What is the origin of the custom of reciting the Our Father during the Mass? Where in Scripture do we find the Our Father? What did Tertullian say of this prayer? What did Saint Gregory write the Bishop of Syracuse regarding the

Lord's Prayer in the Mass? Why is the present place in the Mass appropriate?

4. What do the first petitions of the Our Father ask? How do we gain the right to call God Our Father? What does the "Our" emphasize? What should it mean to have God for our Father?
5. What should we consider when we say, "Who art in heaven"? "Hallowed be Thy Name"? "Thy kingdom come"? "Thy will be done"? "Give us this day our daily bread"? "Forgive us our trespasses"? "Lead us not into temptation"? "Deliver us from evil"? Why does the priest respond "Amen"?
6. At the words, *"Deliver us, we beseech Thee,"* what are the actions of the priest? What is the Embolism? What does the word mean? What is its origin? What does it ask? What are the priest's actions at the words, "Mercifully grant peace"?
7. What are the actions of the priest in the *Breaking of the Bread?* What prayer is said? What prayers follow?
8. What is *the origin of the Fraction?* Where is it found? Why is it observed? What is the Scriptural evidence that Christ commanded it? What custom of the early Christians shows this also? What was the ceremony of the Fraction in Stational Masses? What was the *Sancta?* In what processions was it carried? How was it venerated? How are we reminded of this ceremony at Solemn High Mass? What is the meaning of the breaking of the Host over the Chalice?
9. What ceremony accompanies the *mingling of the Consecrated Species?* What prayer is said? What is its origin? What custom of the early Church is suggested by naming the Body and Blood?
10. What is the source of the *"Agnus Dei"?* When was the chant introduced into the Mass? How has this prayer been developed? What thought should remain with us from the constant reference to peace in the Mass prayers? What was the meaning of the dying words of Jacopone da Todi?

Religious Practices:

1. Peace *is* Christ. Receive Him often in Holy Communion.
2. Endeavor always to see Christ as He lives in the members of the Mystical Body.

Unit Five

Lesson XXIII

THE COMMUNION

ONE of the oldest symbols for the Divine Saviour which has come down to us from the early Church is the fish. The original reason for this was the fact that the first letters of the five words in Greek signifying "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour" spell the Greek word meaning "fish." The fish thereupon was adopted by the Christians as a sign or token of their faith and also as a symbol of their Redeemer. In drawings on the walls of the Catacombs illustrating the Eucharistic banquet a basket of fish is nearly always part of the picture. A priceless inscription on a tomb dating to the early part of the third century gives us a full expression of the significance of Holy Communion:

"O divine race of the celestial Fish, receive with a contrite heart, while yet among mortals, immortal life in the divine waters. Friend, refresh thy soul with the eternal waves of that wisdom which confers treasures upon us. Receive the sweet refreshment of the Saviour of the saints. Satisfy thy hunger, thou who hast the Fish in thy hands."

The reference to "the Fish in thy hands" may be explained by the ancient custom of receiving the Body of Christ in the palm. At Communion the people remained standing in respect and joy, their right hands supported by their left. The women covered their right hand with a piece of white linen. The celebrant then placed the Sacred Bread in their right hands and they put it in their mouths themselves.

This inscription emphasizes the thought that Jesus is sacrificial food for our souls, and that Holy Communion is a spiritual banquet. We have had this idea presented in the petition: "Give us this day our daily bread" of the Pater Noster. The breaking of the Host continues the note, for it was an action preliminary to the distribution of the bread at the Last Supper. When the Sacred Bread has been broken, the priest calls out to the Lamb of God for mercy and peace.

The prayers of the priest's immediate preparation for his Communion, which we will discuss in this lesson, stress even more vividly the concept of "food for the soul." At this time you should read all three of them, beginning with "O Lord Jesus Christ, Who didst say to Thy Apostles, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you."

The liturgical prayers and actions which the Church requires shall precede Communion include: (1) the three prayers of the priest in preparation for his Communion, mentioned just above; (2) the kiss of peace; (3) the prayers and ceremonies of the celebrant's Communion; (4) the prayers and ceremonies of the people's Communion.

The Three Prayers

The three prayers which follow the Agnus Dei were at first private prayers by which the priest prepared his soul for the final action of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. They were in existence before the tenth century but were not extensively used until the fourteenth. As these prayers are addressed to Christ, the priest is required by the liturgy to recite them with his eyes fixed upon the Host, his folded hands on the edge of the altar, and with his body moderately inclined.

The first prayer is a plea for peace and unity for the Church which continues the last petition of the Agnus Dei. It is not, therefore, entirely personal. The celebrant in deep humility asks our Saviour not to look upon his sins, but to regard the faith of the Church. Our study of the Mass gives us a strong sense of the longing for peace which possesses men's hearts. Throughout the Mass both priest and people pray unceasingly for this precious gift both for themselves and for the Church. In heaven we shall find the peace of God "which surpasses all understanding." But though peace here below is more or less imperfect, mixed with suffering and sadness, we can approach heavenly peace even now by detaching ourselves from the world and losing our hearts in God by the way of godliness and mortification.

This prayer is not said at Masses for the Dead.

The Kiss of Peace

At a Solemn High Mass the celebrant next kisses the altar, which symbolizes Christ, and gives the kiss of peace to the deacon saying: "Pax tecum," "Peace be to thee"; to which the deacon answers: "And with thy spirit." The kiss of peace is not given at Low Masses and Masses for the Dead. Until a few hundred years ago, the universal custom of the Church was to have this kiss of peace transmitted through the deacon to the entire congregation. In the thirteenth century, at the time of Pope Innocent III, this ceremony was discontinued. In its place a small object of silver or gold with a figure of the Crucified Saviour upon it was passed from the celebrant to the clerics in the sanctuary and from them to the people. All kissed the figure at this time in the Mass. The custom is not entirely abandoned, but we seldom see it practised today.

As a symbol of that Christian love which makes men live together in peace, the kiss of peace has been part of the Mass since the days of the Apostles. The time and manner of imparting it has varied in different centuries and rites, and still varies. In the Roman rite today it takes place at Solemn High Masses only, after the first prayer of the celebrant, and is confined to those in the sanctuary. It serves as a preparation for receiving the Sacrament of charity and peace, and is a sign also that when those present partake of the Bread of angels, all past differences and quarrels have been banished from their hearts.

The kiss of peace is never given on Holy Thursday, because the Church wishes to emphasize that she abhors the traitorous kiss of betrayal given by Judas on that day. Its omission at Masses for the Dead may be explained by the fact that originally these were private Masses and Communion was not distributed at them.

The Second Prayer of Preparation

The priest continues to pray, "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God," with his eyes and his heart lost in adoration of the Divine Victim lying before Him. Like the first prayer, this one is unusual, inasmuch as it is addressed directly to Christ, rather than to God the Father through Christ. It repeats Saint Peter's solemn profession of faith in the Divinity of Jesus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). In a way, the priest's profession of faith is even more profound than that of Saint Peter, for on the altar both the Divinity and the humanity of Christ are concealed. In the words of the hymn, "Adoro te":

> "Upon the Cross God only hid from view;
> But here lies hid at once the Manhood too."

Peter saw His humanity, and professed His Divinity. The priest, seeing neither, confesses both with a firm faith when he says: "O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God."

The words, "Never suffer me to be separated from Thee," are a touching plea for frequent Communion. We cannot get along without Jesus in our lives. In everything we do, in every minute of the day, we need the refreshment, the strength and the consolation of the eternal Bread of life. To feel this need for the Saviour all the time, is to have truly gained all the wisdom and the happiness which it is possible to secure in this world.

Read the second prayer and find the phrases which point out how life came to the world; Whose will it was that we should be redeemed; which Person of the Trinity coöperates to give us spiritual life; what it is that opposes this life in our souls; and what it is that separates us from Christ.

The Third Prayer of Preparation

The priest continues with the third prayer, which is a plea that the reception of the Host may not, on account of his unworthiness, be a source of condemnation, but rather that it may be a "safeguard and a healing remedy."

The beginning of this third prayer was prompted by the warning of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians: "Let a man prove himself . . . for he who eats and drinks unworthily, without distinguishing the Body, eats and drinks judgment to himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28, 29). We are indeed absolutely unworthy in ourselves to partake of the immaculate Body of the Lamb of God. We dare to partake, however, because we are commanded to do so by Jesus; by doing so we inherit everlasting life.

This sense of unworthiness for a long time kept most of the faithful, even monks and nuns, from receiving Communion frequently. Such infrequent reception was against the divine purpose of the Eucharist. The Bread of heaven is not meant to be a reward for holiness, but rather it is a means of becoming holy. It is a food which makes us strong for our pilgrimage toward final sanctification and the Vision of God. Pope Pius X did much to spread this sublimely comforting truth by encouraging daily Communion and by permitting children once more to receive their Lord at the altar with the older Christians.

On the other hand, we must also be careful not to allow reception of Communion to become a matter of familiar routine. We must cry out with the centurion that we are not worthy to have Him enter into our house; yet we must have the proper dispositions of confidence and freedom from sin which will prompt us to make use of our best means of becoming worthy to receive the Body of our Divine Saviour.

This prayer projects the thought that Communion is not alone a source of supernatural life, but is a safeguard and a healing remedy for the body also. Saint Paul told the Corinthians that because of the carelessness and abuses which had crept into their celebration of the mysteries, "many among you are infirm and weak, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30).

The three prayers have now been said. Note that they remind us of three effects of Holy Communion which will be produced in our souls: peace, healing and grace. Note also how we put our trust in the merits and the faith of the Church, because she, the Spouse of Christ, has herself prepared this solemn action in which we are about to participate. Our union with Jesus will be productive of good fruit; the bonds of charity which unite all the faithful, making them one in Christ, will be drawn closer, and we will all be offered, through Jesus, to the Blessed Trinity. For all this our Lord instituted the Eucharist.

The Communion of the Celebrant

We shall list the ceremonies and prayers of the priest's Communion in numbered sequence with brief comments necessary to our understanding of each:

1. The priest genuflects and says: "I will take the bread of heaven and call upon the name of the Lord." With the exception of the phrase "bread of heaven," these words are taken from Psalm 115. This action and prayer express the eager longing of the soul for its Divine Food.

2. As he says the words noted above, the priest takes the Sacred Host from the paten, and supporting the paten with the lower fingers of his left hand, holds the two halves of the Host between the thumb and first finger of his left hand. He raises Host and paten a little from the altar, bends slightly, and three times in a raised voice protests his unworthiness, in a paraphrase of the words of the centurion whose faith and humility brought about the healing of his servant (Luke 7:6, 7). The server rings the bell each time the celebrant strikes his breast and cries: "Domine, non sum dignus. . . . " — "Lord, I am not worthy. . . . "

In striking the breast we imitate the publican who, "standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast" (Luke 18:13). This action comes to us from the Synagogue. In ancient times it was an involuntary gesture of one in great trouble, or filled with shame and penitence. The homilies of Saint Augustine show that his people struck their breasts at the "Forgive us our trespasses" in the Our Father.

3. The priest, who has held the Sacred Host in his left hand, now takes it into his right hand, raises it to the level of his eyes

and with it traces a cross before himself, saying: "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen." He then bends down, rests his elbows on the altar, and receives the Sacred Body of our Divine Lord. After that he stands erect and pauses in deep meditation with his hands united before his face.

4. Next follow the prayers and ceremonies of receiving the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. The priest recites the words of the prayer beginning, "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?", from Psalm 115 — words which Christ is said to have sung in thanksgiving at the Last Supper — takes the pall from the mouth of the chalice, and genuflects.

5. The priest takes the paten and gathers with it any loose Particles which may have fallen from the Host upon the corporal. He brushes these Particles into the Chalice, which he takes in his right hand saying: "I will take the chalice of salvation and I will call upon the name of the Lord." To this he adds a prayer from Psalm 17: "Praising I will call upon the Lord: and I shall be saved from my enemies."

6. With the Chalice in his right hand, he makes the outline of a cross, saying: "May the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen." Then he places the paten under his chin with his left hand and receives the Precious Blood.

The Communion of the People

By devoutly following the prayers and ceremonies of the priest, we continue our own preparation for receiving the Eucharist. In general, the prayers of the people's Communion have the same meaning as those just explained.

1. The people advance to the altar-rail at the sound of the bell when it is rung for the priest's "Domine, non sum dignus." At a Solemn High Mass, the deacon now recites the Confiteor. At a Low Mass, the server (and in some places the whole congregation) says it. The priest meanwhile takes the ciborium, which

contains the Hosts for the people, from the tabernacle and opens it.

2. He now turns partly toward the communicants, without turning his back to the Blessed Sacrament on the altar, and gives the absolution, which is a sacramental in which the Church implores that our venial sins may be forgiven. At the words "pardon, absolution and remission," the people make the Sign of the Cross with the priest.

3. The priest holds a small Host over the ciborium and recites the words of Saint John the Baptist upon beholding Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God. . . . "

4. The people strike their breasts three times, and with the priest they three times say the words of the centurion: "Lord, I am not worthy. . . . " We should try at this time to imitate the faith and humility of the centurion.

5. The priest goes down to the altar-rail and administers Holy Communion to the kneeling people. As he gives the Blessed Host to each person, he says the "Corpus Domini. . . . " — "May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life everlasting. Amen"; meanwhile making a cross over the ciborium.

At the Communion rail all are on the same level, whether rich, poor, educated or uneducated. All receive the Saviour of mankind with the same ceremonies and prayers. As a trace of the time when the early Christians themselves said "Amen" after the prayer "Corpus Domini," today the newly ordained in the Mass of Ordination answer this "Amen" themselves.

Spiritual Communion

If we do not communicate during Mass we should show our Saviour that at least we desire to make what is called a spiritual Communion. The following prayer may be used for this purpose:

> "O Jesus, my soul hungers and thirsts after Thee. I long to receive every day Thy most Holy Body. I implore, at least, Thy spiritual presence. I beg of Thee to descend into my soul and give me some share in the infinite merits of Thy death, the memory of which we

> celebrate in this Mass. Grant, O loving Saviour, that I may be made one in union with Thee and Thy Mystical Body."

Communion under Both Species

The most important of the many historical notes on Communion is that which refers to Communion under both species. We have seen that up to the twelfth century Communion was usually administered to the people under both forms, and that subsequently this procedure was more or less restricted to the priest. The Council of Constance made this restriction a universal law of the Church in 1414, for the following reason: (1) The heresiarch John Huss at this time was disturbing society by insisting that Communion must be under both kinds. According to him, Communion under one kind was not Communion at all. To protest against this heresy, the Council of Constance declared that Communion under one species was as true a partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ as Communion under both species. (2) When given to so many, the Precious Blood was exposed to the danger of being spilt. In the eighth century the Church had sought to lessen this danger by directing that the Blood be received by the faithful through a chalice-tube made of gold or silver. (3) Wine was very scarce in some regions — in northern countries especially, genuine wine was extremely rare, and the difficulty of securing enough for the whole congregation at every Mass was very great. (4) The species of wine is difficult for some persons to take. (5) In warm climates it is hard to reserve the Holy Eucharist under this form, as it acidifies so soon. (6) Many students see in the "breaking of the bread" and other expressions from Scripture, evidence of Communion under one kind in the Apostolic days. We know that the two disciples who met our Lord on the road to Emmaus after the Resurrection communicated under one form only, for the Gospel says that "they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:35). Communion under one kind was common in the early Church, and even necessary, in the case of the sick and those who lived far from the church.

In the Old Law, the sacrifice was followed by the sacrificial meal. In the New Law, after we have offered to God the Sacrifice of His Son, He in return shows His pleasure by inviting us to His table where by Holy Communion we partake of His gifts. Thus the people's Communion is a real part of the Holy Sacrifice, and by it we harvest the fruits of the Mass to the fullest exent. All who assist at Mass, whether they receive or not, share of course in the fruits; but for those who receive Holy Communion, the Holy Sacrifice produces its richest graces. The moments of Holy Communion are the most precious of our lives, for then Christ actually lives within our breasts.

Discussion Aids:

1. What is one of the oldest symbols of the Saviour? What is the original reason for this? What evidences its adoption by the early Christians as a sign of faith? What third-century inscription expresses the significance of Holy Communion? What was the ancient custom of receiving Communion? How is the thought that Jesus is sacrificial food for the soul emphasized in the Our Father? in the priest's prayer of immediate preparation? What liturgical prayers and actions precede Communion?
2. What originally were the *three prayers* which follow the Agnus Dei? When did they come into use? What actions of the priest accompany them? What is the purpose of the first prayer? What does it ask? When is it omitted?
3. What is the *kiss of peace?* When is it given? What ceremony accompanied it in the early Church? What was its origin? When is the kiss of peace given today? When is it omitted?
4. What is the *second prayer of preparation?* What are the actions of the celebrant while saying it? What profession of faith does it repeat? Why is the celebrant's profession of faith even more profound? What is the plea for frequent Communion?
5. What is the *third prayer of preparation?* What prompted the beginning of the prayer? How did a sense of unworthiness lead to infrequent Communion? How was daily Communion encouraged? by whom? Why must we prepare prop-

erly for Communion? How is Communion a safeguard and healing remedy? What are three effects of Communion?

6. How does the *Communion of the celebrant* begin? What does this action and prayer express? Why does the celebrant strike his breast? change the Host to his left hand? What are the prayers and ceremonies of receiving the Precious Blood? What action follows?
7. What is the preparation for the *Communion of the people?* When is the absolution given? What action follows? What words are recited? How are all united at the Communion rail?
8. What is a spiritual Communion? What prayer is suggested?
9. For how long was Communion usually received under both species? When did restriction to one species become Church law? What was the occasion for it? What danger in administering Communion was avoided thereby? What danger in preserving the Sacred Species? What Scriptural references evidence Communion under one species? How is the people's Communion a real part of the Holy Sacrifice?

Religious Practices:

1. Receive Holy Communion often to produce in your soul "peace, healing and grace."
2. Devoutly follow the prayers and ceremonies in preparation for Holy Communion.

Unit Five

LESSON XXIV

THE THANKSGIVING

THE brief space of time after we receive Holy Communion is a very precious moment of our lives, for it is rich in grace and love. Jesus Christ, with all the gifts of heaven, has found sanctuary in the heart of man. Our chief concern now must be to exclude all thought of the world from our minds, and retiring into silence, to glorify the Divine Presence so close to our poor humanity. In short, we must in the way of the Church give ourselves completely to making a true thanksgiving for the grace of Communion.

A proper thanksgiving is extremely important because Eucharistic grace thereby floods the heart and is kept there for a longer time. The Church wants this thanksgiving to be left somewhat to the individual devotion of each one of us; therefore the prayers, blessings and ceremonies provided for our public worship at this point are short and simple: (1) the Ablution prayers and actions, (2) the Communion Antiphon, (3) the Postcommunion, (4) the Prayer over the People, (5) the "Ite Missa est" and other dismissal formulas, (6) the "Placeat tibi," (7) the blessing, (8) the Last Gospel, (9) the prayers after Low Mass.

The Ablutions

The priest holds the chalice out to the server or the subdeacon, who pours into it a small amount of wine for the purification of the chalice and the lips of the priest. At the same time he says the prayer, "Quod ore sumpsimus": "Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth," etc. This prayer tells us that the physical act of receiving the Host is not enough to give us the benefits of the sacrament. Only in a clean heart, filled with

early custom was for the priest to say these
the sacristy as a thanksgiving after the sacri
prayer and he could say it or not as he wi
priest read it at the altar. Finally in 1570
an integral part of the Mass. To this da
offering a Pontifical Mass begins it at the
it on his return to the throne, thus prese
old custom.

The only occasions when the last Gospe
John are: the third Mass of Christmas an
ond Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday). A
Christmas and at Masses on Palm Sunday
cipal Mass, various verses from Saint Mat
last Gospel; at the principal Mass on P
which the blessing of Palms takes place)
read. On these occasions when Saint John's
read at the close of Mass, the priest lea
after the Postcommunion and the server mo
side of the altar where it is used instead o
taining Saint John's Gospel.

Because Saint John in these verses gives
elation of the glory of God's eternal life,
Gospel carefully and study each phrase in it

For example: Find the sentence which tel
Person was with God and was also Himself
indicates the unbelief and ignorance of me
words tell us that the grace of God causes u
truth? Whom did God send ahead to tell of
true light? Who was this light? What wo
Jews, Jesus' own people, would not accept H
What words tell us that some did accept H
God? How are we born children of God?
to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem?

Prayers at the Foot of the Altar

After a Low Mass the priest now kneels on
the server and says, in the vernacular — the l

"Placeat tibi, sancta T

The priest bows do
on the edge of the a
end for which he has o
the Sacrifice of the M
dressed to the Trinity
fittingness of its expre
of the Mass:

> "May the hom
> O Holy Trinity;
> though unworthy,
> esty, may be accep
> win forgiveness f
> have offered it.

We may note that
meaningful prayer cor
which the celebrant bi

> "Abide in pea
> in peace. May th
> thee be unto me f
> debts and sins, so
> of Christ without c
> not whether or not
> upon thee."

The Blessing

The "Placeat" leads
for every blessing comes
priest is the channel thr
the altar, and, except at
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faith and zeal, can we receive and keep the fruit of the altar of God. This prayer also begs that the sacrifice which we offer in the days of this temporal life will become for us an enduring remedy against all evils.

Having drunk this first ablution, the priest takes the chalice in both hands and goes to the Epistle corner to receive from the server the second ablution, which consists of both wine and water. This ablution is poured into the chalice over the tips of the celebrant's thumbs and index fingers, thereby removing any particles of the Sacred Host which may have adhered to them. He now says the second prayer, "Corpus tuum, Domine": "May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received. . . ." This last ablution prayer seems to have been a more recent addition to the liturgy than the other. It offers a petition that no stain of sin may remain in the soul which has been refreshed by these "pure and holy sacraments."

By the ablutions the celebrant makes sure that the Sacred Species are guarded from all profane touch. We take care of the tiniest fragments of the Holy Supper because they are so precious to us. This reverence is a great help in fostering our love for the things of God.

In the Middle Ages these prayers were probably said by the priest as a matter of private devotion. The text of both of them is found in part in Postcommunions of some of the old Sacramentaries.

The priest next drinks the second ablution, cleanses the chalice with the purificator and arranges it in the center of the altar. He reverently spreads the chalice veil over it, while (if it be a High Mass) the choir sings the Communion Antiphon.

The Communion Antiphon

The priest himself now reads the Communion verse from the Missal, which is once more on the Epistle side of the altar. This verse is found in the Proper as it is not the same every day. Formerly it was one of the psalms, sung in the same manner as the Introit — that is, it was begun and likewise ended with an antiphon — until all the people had communicated. Today it has been reduced to an antiphon, or in some cases to one or two verses. Saint Augustine introduced the practice of singing psalms at both the Offertory and the Communion. Saint Jerome said: "Every day, when we have been filled with the bread of heaven, we say: Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (a Communion Antiphon taken from Psalm 33). This same antiphon is in the Mass for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost. Find it.

Although the Communion Antiphons are generally taken from the Psalms, some are from other books of Holy Scripture, and a few have been composed or adapted by Holy Church. The Communion verse for the feast of Saint Ignatius the Martyr is his own cry: "I am the wheat of Christ: let me be ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread." Refer to this in your Missal on the feast for February 1. Note the suitability of this exclamation for a Communion Antiphon.

Though rarely referring to the Blessed Eucharist, the Communion Antiphon is usually in harmony with the character of the particular Mass, or the spirit of the feast and liturgical season. Often it is taken from the same psalm from which the Introit, Gradual or Offertory has been selected. Locate the Communion Antiphon for Easter and note that it sums up the whole mystery and spirit of this great Christian festival. It proclaims the triumph of Christ and presses home the lesson which the Apostle teaches in the Epistle for the day. Read this Epistle and compare it with the Communion Antiphon. Is there anything in the antiphon which refers to the Blessed Eucharist?

Find the Communion Antiphon for the feast of the Seven Dolors, which was composed by the Church. Refer to those for the four Sundays in Advent. Do they indicate the Church's spirit during this season? Read the antiphon for the feast of Saint Aloysius. Here we have a reference to the Blessed Eucharist.

The Postcommunion

After the Communion Antiphon, the priest goes to the middle of the altar, kisses it, turns to the people and says, "Dominus vobiscum," to which the server replies for the people, "Et cum spiritu tuo."

He now turns back to the Missal to read the Postcommunion, which is also found in the Proper. The Postcommunion was formerly called the "Oratio ad complendum," or concluding prayer of the Mass, because the moment it was said the people were dismissed. The Postcommunions correspond in number, form and ceremonies with the Collects and Secrets for the day. There is one characteristic difference: the Collect refers exclusively to the feast or season, the Secret chiefly to the sacrifice, but the Postcommunion, while referring to the feast or season, alludes with more directness to the Communion Antiphon just given. In addition, it begs God for grace to come from the heavenly banquet having garnered all the fruit possible for the soul. It is essentially a prayer of thanksgiving, with much the same structure as the Collect.

These points may best be learned from reference to several Postcommunions. We will therefore turn to the Proper.

Find the Second Mass for Christmas day. How many Collects are said? How many Secrets? How many Postcommunions? Read them all and note their harmony in structure and thought.

The Postcommunion, as the official liturgical prayer of thanksgiving, is very short. This follows the earliest tradition, for the Apostles told the first Christians not to give thanks only during the brief moment after Communion, but to spend their entire lives "giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Ephesians 5:20). This continuation of thanksgiving into our whole life is stressed in the Postcommunion of the Sunday after the Ascension, to which you should now refer. The combined note of petition and praise is well illustrated in the Postcommunion for the first Sunday after Pentecost. Read it in your Missal.

Prayer over the People — "Super Populum"

This prayer is not in the Ordinary of the Mass, as it is said only in weekday Masses from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday.

It is called the prayer "Super Populum," for it makes allusion to the people who assist at Mass, and God's favor is invoked upon them. Formerly it was said regularly in the Mass, especially for those who did not receive Holy Communion. Pope Gregory the Great restricted it to Masses of the Lenten season. Refer to this prayer which follows the Postcommunion in most of the weekday Masses during Lent. (It is printed in the Mass for Friday of the Third Week in Lent.) Read it and note its petition.

The Formulas for Dismissal

The priest now goes to the center of the altar, kisses it, and again greets the people with the familiar words, "Dominus vobiscum," to which the server again responds, "Et cum spiritu tuo."

The Sacrifice is now complete and the Mass is finished. At High Mass the deacon sings, and at Low Mass the priest says, "Ite Missa est" — "Go, you are dismissed." The people respond through the lips of the server with their final corporate expression of gratitude for the divine gifts they have received: "Deo gratias" — "Thanks be to God."

When there is no Gloria, as on days of a penitential spirit, as during Advent and Lent, the formula of dismissal is "Benedicamus Domino" — "Let us bless the Lord" — which indicates that before leaving the church we should spend a little time in prayer. Formerly this was an invitation to remain for Vespers, which during Lent were a joint act with the Mass. The server responds "Deo gratias" to this formula also.

At Masses for the Dead the dismissal formula is "Requiescant in pace" — "May they rest in peace." The server's response to this form of dismissal is simply "Amen."

Up to the twelfth century the Mass ended with the words of dismissal, but since then other prayers and ceremonies have been added. This is true of the beginning of the Mass as well; although the Mass actually opens with the Introit, we begin before then. Similarly, although the Mass ends at the "Ite Missa est," we continue it with the "Placeat tibi," the blessing, the last Gospel, and the prayers at the foot of the altar.

"Placeat tibi, sancta Trinitas"

The priest bows down after the dismissal with joined hands on the edge of the altar, and recites a prayer regarding the end for which he has offered the Divine Victim to God through the Sacrifice of the Mass. This prayer, the "Placeat tibi," is addressed to the Trinity; it is outstanding in the sincerity and fittingness of its expression, even among the beautiful prayers of the Mass:

> "May the homage of my service be pleasing to Thee, O Holy Trinity; and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered in the sight of Thy majesty, may be acceptable to Thee: and through Thy mercy win forgiveness for me and for all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

We may note that the Maronite liturgy has a touching and meaningful prayer corresponding to the Roman "Placeat," by which the celebrant bids farewell to the altar of sacrifice:

> "Abide in peace, holy altar, I shall return to thee in peace. May the oblation which I have taken from thee be unto me for a propitiation and remission of my debts and sins, so that I may stand before the throne of Christ without condemnation and confusion. I know not whether or not I shall return to offer sacrifice again upon thee."

The Blessing

The "Placeat" leads naturally to the blessing of the people, for every blessing comes from the Sacrifice of the Mass and the priest is the channel through which it comes. The priest kisses the altar, and, except at Masses for the Dead, gives the congregation his blessing.

The custom of blessing is in accordance with the example of Jesus, Whose last act on earth was to bless His disciples before His Ascension. In the Synagogue the people were blessed before their dismissal with the words: "May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; may the Lord show His face to thee and have pity on thee; may the Lord turn His countenance to thee and grant thee peace." However, there is no evidence up to the eleventh century of the blessing at the end of Mass. During the time of the Stational Masses, the people stood in line and received the blessing of the Supreme Pontiff as he left the church in procession.

In the eleventh century the practice of blessing became quite general, whether the celebrant was the Pope, a bishop or a priest. The form of blessing varied, however. Some used the triple cross, others blessed with the chalice, the paten or the crucifix. Pope Pius V restricted the use of the triple cross to bishops, except at High Masses, when he permitted all priests to use it. Pope Clement VIII in the sixteenth century ruled that priests must always use the single cross, while the triple-cross blessing was reserved to bishops.

The blessing of the priest has wonderful efficacy. It is more than a prayer or expression of kindliness on his part. It is an exercise also of the spiritual powers with which he is invested as a priest of God. God Himself blesses us through His priestly representative, and in His blessing there is much more than a wish for our welfare, though with it He gives us good things, for He is the source of all good.

The Last Gospel

After the priest has given the blessing, he turns to the Gospel corner of the altar and stands there with his face partly toward the people, in the same attitude which he assumed at the first Gospel. The people stand also. Both priest and people sign themselves on the forehead, lips and breast. The priest then reads the first part of the Gospel of Saint John, which is printed on the altar card. He kneels in time to touch the floor at the words, "And the Word was made flesh." The faithful kneel likewise. This action reminds us of the humility of our Lord in being born a man for our salvation. It also emphasizes one of the greatest mysteries of our holy faith: the Incarnation. At the end of the Gospel the altar-boy answers "Deo gratias."

The first fourteen verses of the first chapter of Saint John's Gospel are read except on the two occasions noted below. The early custom was for the priest to say these verses on his way to the sacristy as a thanksgiving after the sacrifice. It was a private prayer and he could say it or not as he wished. Sometimes the priest read it at the altar. Finally in 1570 Pope Pius V made it an integral part of the Mass. To this day, however, a bishop offering a Pontifical Mass begins it at the altar but completes it on his return to the throne, thus preserving a trace of the old custom.

The only occasions when the last Gospel is not that of Saint John are: the third Mass of Christmas and Masses on the Second Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday). At the third Mass of Christmas and at Masses on Palm Sunday other than the principal Mass, various verses from Saint Matthew are read as the last Gospel; at the principal Mass on Palm Sunday (before which the blessing of Palms takes place), no last Gospel is read. On these occasions when Saint John's Gospel is not to be read at the close of Mass, the priest leaves the Missal open after the Postcommunion and the server moves it to the Gospel side of the altar where it is used instead of the altar card containing Saint John's Gospel.

Because Saint John in these verses gives us a marvelous revelation of the glory of God's eternal life, we should read this Gospel carefully and study each phrase in it.

For example: Find the sentence which tells us that the Second Person was with God and was also Himself God. What word indicates the unbelief and ignorance of men's minds? What words tell us that the grace of God causes us to understand the truth? Whom did God send ahead to tell of the coming of the true light? Who was this light? What words tell us that the Jews, Jesus' own people, would not accept Him as the Saviour? What words tell us that some did accept Him as the Son of God? How are we born children of God? What words refer to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem?

Prayers at the Foot of the Altar

After a Low Mass the priest now kneels on the altar steps with the server and says, in the vernacular — the language of the particular country — the prayers at the foot of the altar which were prescribed by Pope Leo XIII in 1884, together with the invocations to the Sacred Heart which were added by Pope Pius X in 1904. Masses of a solemn character are exempt from this command; this includes those Low Masses which take the place of conventual or parochial High Masses, and Masses during, before or immediately after which the celebrant must perform some other function (not the distribution of Communion). Since 1930, by the Holy Father's direction, the specific intention of these prayers is the welfare of the Church in Russia.

They consist of the triple repetition of the Hail Mary, the "Hail, Holy Queen," a prayer to God, our Refuge and Strength, a prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel, who helps us in our battle with evil, and three invocations to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We should read these prayers with attention to their special intercessory character.

Thanksgiving after Mass

Having celebrated the supreme act of worship, the priest spends some time in offering thanks. The Church proposes for his use certain prayers, which may be found in the Missal. The faithful should also make a thanksgiving after Mass, which could well include some prayers of the Mass in addition to their private devotions. One of these, for example, might be repeated: the Gloria; the Creed; the prayers of the Offertory; the Preface which is especially appropriate; the prayers of the Canon; the Pater Noster; the prayers before Communion and during the ablutions; and the Epistle, Gospel and Collect of the day, which show the operation of God in our hearts. Psalms 22, 26 and 33, which refer to the Blessed Eucharist, have been used since the earliest days of the Church as thanksgiving after Communion.

In closing our lessons on the action of the Mass, we cannot do better than read the words of one of Cardinal Newman's characters in *Loss and Gain:* "To me nothing is so consoling, so piercing, so thrilling, so overcoming, as the Mass, said as it is among us. I could attend Masses forever, and not be tired. It is not a mere form of words — it is a great action, the greatest action that can be on earth. . . . He becomes present on the altar in flesh and blood, before Whom angels bow and devils tremble. . . . Words are necessary, but as means, not ends; they are not mere addresses to the throne of grace; they are the instruments of what is far higher, of consecration, of sacrifice. They hurry on as if impatient to fulfill their mission. Quickly they go, the whole is quick; for they are all parts of one integral action. Quickly they go, for they are awful words of sacrifice, they are a work too great to delay upon; as when it was said in the beginning: 'What thou dost, do quickly.' Quickly they pass; for the Lord Jesus goes with them, as He passed along the lake in the days of His flesh, quickly calling first one and then another. . . . We, all around, each in his place, look out for the great Advent, 'waiting for the moving of the water.' Each in his place, with his own heart, with his own wants, with his own thoughts, . . . separate but concordant, . . . watching its progress, uniting in its consummation; . . . we take our part with God's priest, supporting him, yet guided by him. There are little children there, and old men, and simple laborers, and students in seminaries . . . but out of these many minds rises one Eucharistic hymn, and the great Action is the measure and the scope of it."

Discussion Aids:

1. What should be our chief concern after receiving Holy Communion? Why is a proper thanksgiving important? What prayers and ceremonies assist us?
2. What is the purpose of the *ablutions?* What does the first ablution prayer tell us? What ceremony accompanies its recitation? What follows? What does this prayer offer? What evidences the age of these prayers?
3. What is the *Communion Antiphon?* Where is it found? What practice regarding the singing of psalms did Saint Augustine introduce? What are the sources of these antiphons? Which did Saint Ignatius compose? With what is the antiphon usually in harmony?
4. What is the Postcommunion? With what does it correspond in number, form and ceremonies? What characteristic differ-

ence is there? Why is it a prayer of thanksgiving? How should we give thanks?

5. Where do we find *the Prayer over the People?* To whom does it allude?
6. What are the *formulas for dismissal?* What is the response of the people? When does the dismissal formula change? Why? When did Mass end with this dismissal?
7. What are the actions of the celebrant following the dismissal? What is the prayer? What are the ends for which the prayer is offered? What is the prayer of the Maronite liturgy?
8. From what does every *blessing* come? What was Christ's last act before His Ascension? What was the blessing of the Synagogue? How did the ceremony of the blessing develop? What did Pope Clement VIII rule regarding the ceremony? What is the efficacy of the priest's blessing?
9. How does the priest begin the *last Gospel?* What Scriptural reading comprises the last Gospel on most days of the year? When does he kneel? What does this action emphasize? When did the last Gospel become an integral part of the Mass? When is another Gospel substituted? How is a change indicated?
10. By whom were the *prayers at the foot of the altar* prescribed? the invocations to the Sacred Heart added? For what intention are these prayers offered? What are these prayers?
11. Why should we make a *thanksgiving after Mass?* What Mass prayers might be repeated? What does Cardinal Newman say of the Mass?

Religious Practices:

1. Always remain for the priest's blessing, which is really that of God Himself.
2. Join with devotion the prayers at the foot of the altar for the welfare of the Church.

UNIT SIX:

Application

LESSON XXV

THE MASS AND CATHOLIC ACTION

WE HAVE an obligation to live a Christian life. This is a gigantic task, and everything which yields us help must be brought to the service of that obligation. Our present study would fail in this most important point if we did not attempt to gather the occasional applications to life which have been made in the course of these chapters, and going deeper and more pointedly into both our own spiritual and our own natural life, to see how these should be directed, heightened and motivated by the great action of the Holy Sacrifice.

Our aim will be to indicate how the Mass is rightfully the center of all that we know and practise in the field of Catholic life. This lesson will link the Mass to the inner life of each one of us, and to our share in the religious activities of the Church. The next lesson will reach out from this center to those phases of life which both touch upon and overlie this inner spiritual life, namely, the family, school, work, recreation, the community and society in general.

The Center of the Circle

What is Catholic Action? Pope Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic Action, said that Catholic Action is the help which the laity give the bishops and priests in the task of establishing the kingdom of Christ on earth.

What is the liturgy? The definition of liturgy which we have already given may be cast into new words in order to relate it more understandably to this lesson: The liturgy is the public and official worship of the Church which unites us with God.

How are Catholic Action and the liturgy related? Before we can act together "to establish the kingdom of Christ on earth," we must be united in our aims and in the means of carrying out those aims. The liturgy has one purpose: the glory of God and, through it, the sanctification of His children — in a word, the establishment of the kingdom of Christ on earth. It has one means: the Mass and the sacraments, and the wealth of official ceremony and prayer which clusters around and within them, uniting all in the perfect worship of God. The more we understand the liturgy and live it every moment of our lives, the more vital and successful will Catholic Action be because the liturgy lays and strengthens the foundations of Catholic Action, that is, defines its purpose and supplies its means.

The center of the liturgy. The liturgy covers a wide field, and it may be widened increasingly, like the circumference of a circle, to include many zones of activity in various social units. But the center is always the same: the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. There is no single part of the liturgy without a real connection with the Eucharist. Every sacrament and rite of the Church converges about this most important part of Christian worship.

Christian worship is not a mere feeling of benevolence toward others nor a vague recognition that some Greater Power than ourselves rules and orders the universe. It is fundamentally an act of sacrifice in which we share. To think of liturgy chiefly as Gregorian chant, vestments, beautiful prayers and exquisitely executed bows, is false, for without the essential and dominating note of sacrifice, the liturgy as such does not exist. The externals of the liturgy help, of course, to solidify the public nature of the Mass and to utilize our human means of expressing this spirit of sacrifice; but it is the interior meaning which gives light and radiance to the externals.

Since we have used the figure of the circle to indicate that the Mass is the center which reaches out to the experiences of life in the various social groups to which we all belong, the circle again may be made to illustrate the various zones of the liturgy. Through our senses we approach the outer margin, where we find music, incense, ceremonies, colors and so forth; we step into a deeper circle which encloses the various sacramentals and liturgical prayers; next we reach the sacraments; and then we arrive at the very center, the Mass, which as the Supreme Sacrifice is the essential, integral and controlling factor in that sacred citizenship which Catholics enjoy in Christ's kingdom.

Catholic Action Begins at the Altar

Pope Pius X said: "Let the faithful as much as possible cooperate in the sacred mysteries, for it is there primarily and necessarily that they will catch the true Christian spirit."

Our part in Catholic Action begins at the altar, when we are on our knees with the rest of the faithful offering the Divine Sacrifice to God through, with and in Christ.

Our first task at this point is to learn just what our individual attitude should be toward the Mass and those who participate in its action with us. Our second task is to name the definite ways by which we can fulfil our duty in regard to Catholic Action.

Collectivism

We have become largely a nation of onlookers. There was a time, for example, when everyone actively engaged in recreation. But now we train a few athletes to amuse us while we sit and watch them. Psychologists say that we are losing our ability to participate in recreation, and that with this our senses lose their power. It should not be so in religion. We should not be mere onlookers, whose passivity deadens or kills completely those spiritual faculties and senses which are needed by every citizen of the Church in the Lay Apostolate of Catholic Action.

Cast your thoughts back over the explanation of the Mass which we have just covered. Recall all the ways by which the members of the early Church emphasized the communal spirit of the Mass. A springlike freshness suffused the hundreds of eager hearts together offering worship in its most perfect form, wherein each had a jubilant part. Compare that attitude with the spirit of some people at Mass today. While the choir sings the Mass, and the priest offers the Sacrifice according to the formulas of Holy Mother Church, some of the faithful listlessly sit back and let the divine mysteries slip silently by, content that by their physical presence they have escaped the penalty of mortal sin; others are wrapped in their own private thoughts — be they prayers or distractions — utterly unaware that the most sublime Action of all is progressing in their presence. By such individualism we hurt ourselves, we lose the value of the liturgy, we miss the motive power for Catholic Action, and the force which sanctifies our relationships is dissipated — sometimes, perhaps, entirely destroyed.

The Spirit of Catholic Action Flows from the Prayers of the Mass

We must make up our minds to use the official prayers of the Church during Mass, even though this does mean giving up our private devotions at that time. We should do this for the following reasons:

1. Private devotions may make us grow inward and develop a certain spiritual selfishness. The prayers of the Missal include the entire Church (as, for instance, in the prayer at the offering of the bread). The Church warns us against being too interested in our little selves. Our concern should be in keeping with our name of Catholic, which means universal. Mindful of the rights and interests of others, we will no longer worry over and resent our personal misfortunes and needs. Nor will our own problems for that reason remain unconsidered, for God has them in His thought, and the many Catholics of the Church throughout the world include them in their communal prayers.

The action of the Mass is not selfish, for it is offered for and by all the members of the Mystical Body of Christ. We include in it the needs of our family, our schoolmates, our fellow-workers, the problems of our bishop and our land, the problems of the Church and the world.

A person who thinks only of himself becomes selfish, and a selfish person can do little to help establish the kingdom of Christ on earth. But if we take part in the public and official worship of the Church which unites us with God, there is little danger of our becoming spiritually selfish.

2. While many private devotions are beautiful and helpful, they may have a harmful effect upon the religious attitude and personality of the young. Private methods of hearing Mass are often highly emotional. These prayers were composed by men. The prayers of Mass and the other official services of the liturgy were composed by God and by His Church, and for that reason they possess the note of perfectly balanced religious worship. The prayers of the Church are sober and reasonable, rather than emotional and unsubstantial. They concentrate on the great truths of our faith to the exclusion of all that is trivial and individual in appeal. They form an excellent basis for Catholic Action.

How We Should Foster This Spirit

(a) The Missal

The use of the layman's Missal must be encouraged. Though many will object that they get more out of the Mass for themselves if they use some other book, we must again maintain that our primary purpose in offering Mass is not to get something for ourselves but to give glory to God. The first concern of the Mass is the fitting worship of God.

Moreover, an exact knowledge of the meaning of the Mass will in the long run give us infinitely more than any private devotion. If we assist at Mass with a Missal after studying the ceremonies and prayers, we soon will know the principal prayers and actions, and they will reveal to us their profound and beautiful meanings. Then we will be free to unite our souls perfectly with the sentiments of the priest at the altar. This will not grow tiresome, for the Mass is not just words; it is also action. And it is action which continues on into our daily life. It is, in a word, Catholic Action.

In the use of the Missal we follow the action of the priest. We were given a share in the priesthood of Christ by Baptism. We should not fail to exercise this privilege by offering Mass with His ordained priests.

(b) Singing

The early Christians loved to sing, perhaps because singing is so completely a collective exercise and thus expresses that unity of hearts which underlies the proper offering of Mass. Unfortunately today congregational singing is almost unheard of, and even when it does take place, it is often a listless vocalizing of popular hymns which have no liturgical authority back of them. Some of us have an opportunity in this matter to be apostles of Catholic Action in the sphere of church music. Whenever the custom of our parish permits, we should sing throughout the Mass with our whole heart and voice. Then, if possible, we should learn the official chant of the Church, which is sublime in its contrast with mere emotion-stirring non-liturgical music. If each of us would resolve to sing at Mass whenever permitted, and to learn the plainchant and other music of the liturgy, it would be a splendid move in the direction of uniting all of us closer in the Mystical Body of Christ.

(c) Processions

We do not have processions today as often as did the Christians of the early Church. But we should grasp every opportunity which presents itself to walk in a religious procession in order to participate in an act of communal worship as well as to give open testimony to our faith. Processions are held in connection with the Mass in most parishes from time to time; there are other religious processions not directly related to the celebration of

Mass. They afford us an opportunity of fostering in our hearts the spirit of the liturgy.

Another valuable exercise is that of going to Mass in a body, either with family, friends, a church society, a school club or an athletic group. Refer again to our early definition of Catholic Action and discuss how these activities both embody and enhance it.

(d) Attending Solemn High Mass

Most of us attend a Low Mass rather than a High or Solemn High Mass. We think of the Low Mass as the regular or usual type, when as a matter of fact the Solemn High Mass is the form the Church regards as the norm. Low Masses were first permitted as a matter of convenience at certain times and places where it was difficult to employ the full splendor of ritual. The Low Mass is, therefore, actually a shortened Solemn Mass, with the celebrant reciting all the prayers and chants which are supposed to be sung by the choir or the assisting clergy in the sanctuary. The power of the Mass as a communal form of worship does not stand out so strikingly in the Low Mass. To foster this spirit we should avail ourselves of every occasion when Solemn High Masses are celebrated.

(e) Other Suggestions

There are many other ways by which we preserve and nourish the true spirit of Catholic Action that lies at the sacrificial heart of the liturgy: (1) We must be ready always to explain to others that the essential nature of the Mass is that of sacrifice. (2) We must both teach and practise the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. Our lives must be completely absorbed and vitalized by the fact that as Catholics we are not alone in any of our actions. In some way everything we do stirs the whole body for good or evil. (3) We may more appropriately give Missals as gifts than books of private devotion. (4) We must never grow weary of discussing and explaining the external actions of the sacrifice, especially to non-Catholics, or those who are indifferent to the Mass. Externals are often a stumbling block. They can, however, be made the outer zone from which the honest seeker travels to the heart of the mystery. (5) We must feel ourselves, and help others to feel, the special character of each feast; and especially we should not lose sight for a single hour of the meaning and the claims of the liturgical seasons. By this we unite ourselves more closely to our Lord's sacramental life, and a supernatural element enters our lives which elevates all that we do.

If we do these things we will become immersed in the spirit of unity in Christ which permeates the Mass. For ourselves, we will never feel lonely and weak in the face of the difficulties of life, nor grow tired of coping even with problems which seem too great to solve. We will have the inspiration, the strength and the stability that come from being united with others in the Mystical Body of Christ. For others, we will be led to do all those great things which their character as fellow-members of Christ's Body requires of us, difficult and distasteful though these things may sometimes be.

In the next lesson we will examine these requirements in detail, to see how we continue the Mass in our daily relationships within the family, the school, our place of work, the community, the nation and the world. The Mass gives us the proper viewpoint, the proper spirit of brotherliness and the spiritual strength to carry Catholic Action into these widening fields of our life's activity. Unless we carry Christ in our hearts into these other zones, we have done little in the work of establishing His kingdom upon the earth.

Discussion Aids:

1. Why is the Mass rightfully the center of Catholic life?
2. What is *Catholic Action?* What is *the liturgy?* What is its purpose? its one means? How may the field of the liturgy be widened? What is always its center? What is Christian worship? What purpose have externals of the liturgy? How may a circle illustrate the various zones of the liturgy?

3. Why does *Catholic Action begin at the altar?* How does our part in it begin? Why should we participate in religion? Why did the early Christians have a *jubilant* part in the Mass? Why should all take an active part in the sacrifice? What is the attitude of many who attend Mass? Why? How does individualism at Mass hurt us?

4. Why must we use the official prayers of the Church during Mass? What may private devotions lead to? Why should we be mindful of the interests of others? Why is the action of the Mass unselfish? Whose needs do we include in the Mass? How does the official worship of the Church guard against selfishness? By whom are private prayers composed? the prayers of the Mass? On what do they concentrate?

5. (a) Why must use of *the Missal* be encouraged? What is our primary purpose in offering the Mass? Why should we study the ceremonies and prayers of the Mass? How should the action of the Mass continue for us? How were we given a share in the priesthood of Christ? How should we exercise this privilege?

   (b) Why did the early Christians *sing?* Why should we learn the official chant of the Church? How does the music of the liturgy unite us?

   (c) Why should we walk in religious *processions?* go to Mass in a body?

   (d) Why should we *attend Solemn High Mass?* What is Low Mass?

   (e) How may we nourish the spirit of Catholic Action? Why should we realize that as Catholics we are not alone in our actions ? In what other ways may we develop the spirit of Catholic Action? Why should we become immersed in the spirit of unity in Christ? What comes from being united with others in Christ? What viewpoint does the Mass give us?

Religious Practices:

1. Participate in the Mass and coöperate with the grace received.
2. Discuss and explain the externals and the action of the Mass, especially to non-Catholics.

Unit Six

LESSON XXVI

THE MASS AND CATHOLIC ACTION (*concluded*)

IN OUR last lesson we considered Catholic Action as developed in our religious activities at the altar of sacrifice. In this lesson we shall discuss the ideals of Catholic Action which should direct and inspire the social groups of which we are a part, and also the manner in which the Mass, as the center of the liturgy, supernaturalizes, sanctifies and nourishes us in our relation to these groups. Individually and socially, we must live the life of the Mystical Body of Christ to the full. The Mass, as we have seen, makes us realize this membership, points out our responsibilities as members, and gives us opportunities to be active in our relations with the other members. Like a great beam of light, the Mass reaches out to all parts of the circle of social groups surrounding it, helping us always to remember our spiritual citizenship, as we go about our daily activities.

Our study has shown us that we all must sacrifice ourselves to express our worship of God; but men are reluctant to do this. As true today as it was centuries ago is the complaint expressed in one of the greatest of all Catholic books, "The Imitation of Christ": "Jesus has now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom, but few are willing to bear His cross. . . . Many follow Jesus to the breaking of the bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His Passion" (Book 2, ch. 11). Let us not be cowardly or half-hearted followers of our Lord; let us carry the spirit of sacrifice we learned in the Mass beyond the orbit of religious activity itself into the family, the school, the community and society. We are not Catholics in the shadow of the altar alone; we are Catholics all the time. Our goal is the heavenly kingdom; but our aim also is to establish that kingdom on earth — and it is by sacrifice and suffering that we are solidly united with the Divine Head from Whose sacred wounds flows the life-giving grace that will establish it.

In the Family

Much of this lesson will be devoted to Catholic Action in the family. One of the members of the American hierarchy has said: "The most extensive and at the same time the most fertile field of Catholic Action in America and the world today is not the reconstruction of industry, or of politics, or even of the schoolroom, but the renovation of the Christian spirit in domestic society."

In this chapter we will stress especially Catholic Action in the home. This is practical, inasmuch as most of us can make a more immediate application of the principles of Catholic Action to home life than to any other social unit. Moreover, it has a general bearing also, as the home influences all other social units to a great degree. Each principle of Catholic Action which develops from the Mass, though applied immediately to the home, is applied likewise to the wider social groups. We build from the bottom up; and once these supernatural qualities and acts flowing from the Mass are received as the foundation of family life, their influence will spread throughout society.

Today Catholic family life is threatened from many directions: by the press, the motion picture, indecent literature, the divorce evil, the denial of marriage as a sacrament, and many other false teachings and harmful conditions. In this situation the family cannot be saved unless each one of us, by making sacrifices, contributes to its spiritual unity. The modern tendency, which emphasizes the material and the individual, is toward selfishness and separation from the responsibilities of the group. The Mass has the directly opposite effect.

The Mass has drawn us all closer to one another, as members of Christ's Mystical Body. We have offered the corporate sacrifice to show our love for God; now we must further order all our thoughts, words and actions that affect the members of our immediate family circle so that they too continue the spirit of sacrifice and divine worship. Love and affection are the cornerstone of family life, and they call for constant sacrifice of our own wills and desires. Based on the love of God, such human attachments as the family provides will be a source of edification, inspiration and eternal salvation for ourselves and for the other members of the family. Thus the love of God which is fostered through the Sacrifice of the Altar unites the parents and the children in each Christian family, and each family in turn becomes a unit in the great Spiritual Family whose Head is the Son of God.

How We Can Develop Catholic Action in the Home

The family should give thanks to God for the blessings of their life together, and the perfect thanksgiving is, as we know, the Mass. Hence the family should attend church in a group. This also expresses their solidarity as a Christian unit. The parents and the older children should instruct the younger members by their words and their example as to the supreme importance of the Mass and the lessons it teaches.

To foster interest in the Mass, your family might adopt the project of living the liturgical year as it passes along. This could be done beautifully and effectively by the custom of having the children take turns at reading the Epistle and the Gospel of the Mass of the day during the principal meal. What an effect such a custom would have on the table conversation! It would be purified and elevated, and all traces of dissension would be banished. If we would imitate Christ, we should remember that the family is a holy institution, and our domestic table should reflect the virtues of the table of sacrifice around which our Lord gathered His family of disciples for the Last Supper.

Another way of introducing Catholic Action into the home is by celebrating in some little way, as a family unit, the great feasts of the Church Year, such as Easter, Pentecost, Epiphany and the holydays. We might also give due honor to the feast day of each member's patron saint, to Baptisms, Confirmations, First Holy Communions, marriages and anniversaries of deaths. Group devotion and honor has been stressed throughout the Mass. This should continue into the family life. The family should also observe during Lent and the vigils some uniform plan of fasting and mortification suited to the age and condition of each member of the family. Another beautiful practice would be the renewal of the marriage vows on the feast of the Holy Family. The zeal for the salvation of the souls of the other members of the family which the Mass inculcates makes it imperative that no one bring into the home anything that would injure the virtue of any member, such as lurid newspapers or bad magazines, books, pictures.

The School and the Press

The lessons of Catholic living which the Mass has taught us must be protected by a sound education, and by the reading of Catholic books and magazines. Our religious principles are often attacked by materialistic and pagan forces, which strive to win the intelligences of our young people through the medium of the schools and the press. Young Catholics are the hope of the future Church in America. If they fail, because of the attacks of these hostile influences, to carry out through life the principles developed at Mass and furthered in their homes, the kingdom of Christ on earth will be retarded.

Thus life in school is a powerful part of Catholic Action. We see all around us the unhappy results of education without religious principles. Even non-Catholic educators admit that morality suffers woefully outside the Catholic schools; for without religion there can be no solid basis for teaching morality.

The press is, equally with the school, a vital educating force. The true apostle of Catholic Action will do all in his power to promote the reading and study of the best Catholic papers, periodicals and books. Pope Pius X said: "In vain you will build churches, give missions, found schools — all your work, all your efforts, will be destroyed if you are not able to wield the defensive and offensive weapon of a loyal and sincere Catholic press. . . . I would make any sacrifice, even to pawning my ring, pectoral cross and soutane, in order to support a Catholic paper."

Naturally, it is difficult to keep Catholics from reading the secular press. Nor is its influence wholly evil. But inasmuch as it is ignorant of the great guiding principles of Christian living, it is a potential source of harm and error. This may be largely offset by a diet of Catholic reading. Well instructed from such reading in the principles of our faith, we will have no difficulty in discovering the error or the destructive power of much of our present-day secular journalism.

We can do our part in the fields of education and journalism by such activities as encouraging attendance at Catholic schools, fighting yellow journalism in our homes, increasing the distribution of Catholic reading, and presenting our faith to non-Catholics through both the spoken and the printed word. Activities of supreme importance would be organizing Mass attendance projects in school and engaging, under the direction of the pastor, in putting a Catholic paper in every home.

In Recreation

All that we have said about the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass as a self-offering applies to our recreational hours. The spirit of Christian living which the Mass promotes can never be forgotten. If we should dissipate ourselves during our leisure time, we would not be truly living the Holy Sacrifice. We would be taking back the offering of self which, in union with that Sacrifice, we made to God. If we participate in unworthy forms of recreation, such as reading degrading books, attending immoral movies and stage shows, associating with harmful companions, we retard the establishment of Christ's kingdom in our own hearts and in the hearts of others. Worthy forms of recreation which help us to become true apostles of Catholic Action, working with Christ in His Mystical Body, are parish social clubs and discussion clubs, elevating literary work and good reading, theatrical entertainment which both refreshes and inspires, hobbies such as religious art, music, photography. Outdoor activities which impress us with the goodness of God in giving us the powers of our body and the gifts of nature cannot fail to make us love Him more and desire to carry into our lives the sentiments of gratitude and praise which the Mass expresses.

In Society in General

As we grow older we will take part in community life. A good member of the Church is always a good citizen of his community. We must all bear our share in the responsibilities of group living, knowing that society is in reality made up of those who are united with Christ in His Mystical Body. A new social order will come into being when each one of us learns to live by those principles of brotherliness which we learn to know in the Mass. Only from the lessons of the Mass will come that love which will defeat the forces of hate, self-seeking and materialism that bid fair to destroy our present-day society.

Saint Catherine of Siena used to say: "O Eternal God, hasten to have mercy on the world. In its present state, it is clearly on the brink of destruction. For it is deprived of the union of charity with Thee and with the neighbor. Men no longer love one another with a love based on Thee, O Eternal Truth."

Laborers and employers must apply the spirit which animates us at Holy Communion to the solution of their problems. Then they will see each other as brothers with common interests and a common aim in the journey of life to the Vision of God.

All that has been said in these last two lessons on the Mass as the foundation of Catholic Action is summarized by this quotation from an address by a former Apostolic Delegate to this country, Archbishop (now Cardinal) Fumasoni-Biondi: "To be a Catholic means more than belief, prayer, devotions and frequentation of the Sacraments, more than financial support of the

Church and defense of it when it is attacked, more than Catholic schools and more even than Catholic family life. It means all of these and more besides. A Catholic thinks as a Catholic in all his thoughts; he lives his whole life profoundly as a Catholic; he thinks nothing, says nothing and does nothing that does not meet the measure of the shadow of the Cross and the glory of the Risen Lord."

Discussion Aids:

1. How must we live the life of the Mystical Body to the full? Why must we understand the meaning of the Mass? How do we express our worship of God? What does "The Imitation of Christ" say of our reluctance to sacrifice ourselves? To whom should our spirit of sacrifice extend? What is our goal? our aim? How may we establish the heavenly kingdom?
2. Why should Catholic Action extend to *the family?* How is Catholic family life threatened today? How may family life be saved? What modern tendency has the directly opposite effect of the Mass? How may we continue the spirit of sacrifice and divine worship in our lives? What is the cornerstone of family life? How does the Sacrifice of the Altar unite all families?
3. How can we *develop Catholic Action in the home?* How can the family live the liturgical year? What feasts might be celebrated by the family as a unit? How might Lent be observed collectively?
4. How is Catholic Action fostered by *school and press?* How are religious principles often attacked? What is the result of education without religious principles? When is the press a vital educational force? How does Pope Pius X proclaim the need of a Catholic press? Why should we read Catholic publications? What should be our part in the field of education and journalism?
5. How may self-offering be evidenced in *recreation?* What actions retard the establishment of Christ's kingdom? What are worthy forms of recreation? What is the value of outdoor activities?
6. What is our obligation to *society in general?* Why must each bear his share of responsibility? When will a new social order

come into being? What did Saint Catherine of Siena ask for the world? Why? When will laborers and employers solve their problems? What does Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi say of Catholic Action?

Religious Practices:

1. Promote Catholic education. Read and distribute Catholic literature.
2. Continue in every activity the spirit of sacrifice and divine worship originating in the Holy Sacrifice.

LESSON XXVII

TEST EXERCISE ON THE MASS

THE following test exercise can be used in two ways: (1) it can be conducted as a formal test exercise for checking purposes only, or, (2) if time permits, it can be used as a teaching exercise as well. In the latter use, the test will be completed by the student first, after which the answers will be checked in a more or less socialized group project where each answer is verified by oral comment, or reference to the Missal or this lesson text.

The first question in each section that follows has been answered, as an example to the student. The questions are numbered consecutively from 1 to 200, and the method of computing the final score is indicated on page 275.

A

Directions: In the parentheses at the left, number the following divisions of the Mass in the order in which they occur.

( ) 1. Thanksgiving
( ) 2. Instruction
( ) 3. Offertory
( ) 4. Communion
( ) 5. Consecration
(1) 6. Preparation for the Mass

B

Directions: Number the following prayers and chants used during the Mass or in immediate connection with it, in the order in which they occur.

(   ) 7. The Last Gospel
(   ) 8. The Introit
(   ) 9. The Kyrie
(   ) 10. The Gloria
(   ) 11. The Ablution Prayers
(   ) 12. The Collect
(   ) 13. The Epistle
(   ) 14. The Secret Prayers
(   ) 15. The Gospel
(   ) 16. The Creed
(   ) 17. The Gradual and Alleluia
(   ) 18. The Preface to the Canon
(   ) 19. Prayers at the Consecration
(   ) 20. The Sanctus
(   ) 21. The Orate Fratres
(   ) 22. The Lavabo Chant
(1) 23. The Judica me
(   ) 24. Prayer to the Holy Ghost
(   ) 25. The second Diptychs
(   ) 26. The Prayer to the Most Holy Trinity
(   ) 27. The Unde et memores
(   ) 28. The Agnus Dei
(   ) 29. The Lord's Prayer
(   ) 30. The Embolism
(   ) 31. The Placeat
(   ) 32. The Last Blessing
(   ) 33. The Postcommunion
(   ) 34. The Ave Maria
(   ) 35. The first Confiteor
(   ) 36. Invocation to the Sacred Heart
(   ) 37. The Salve Regina
(   ) 38. The second Confiteor
(   ) 39. The first Diptychs
(   ) 40. The Communion Antiphon
(   ) 41. The Ite Missa est

C

Directions: Number the following actions and ceremonies in the order in which they occur in the Mass.

(   ) 42. The incensing of the offerings
(1) 43. The sprinkling with holy water
(   ) 44. The incensing of the Missal

(   ) 45. The blessing of the incense
(   ) 46. The washing of the hands
(   ) 47. The Fraction of the Host
(   ) 48. The Kiss of Peace
(   ) 49. The priest's reception of the Blood of Christ
(   ) 50. The people's reception of Communion
(   ) 51. The Minor Elevation
(   ) 52. The priest's reception of the Body of Christ
(   ) 53. The Major Elevation
(   ) 54. The priest's taking of the ciborium from the tabernacle
(   ) 55. The server's pouring of wine into the chalice
(   ) 56. Our striking our breasts three times at the Agnus Dei
(   ) 57. The priest's and people's kneeling at the words: "And the Word was made flesh"
(   ) 58. The priest's dismissal of the people

LESSON XXVIII

TEST EXERCISE ON THE MASS (*continued*)

D

Directions: In the blank at the left, write the word "Yes" if the words or actions were part of the Last Supper, and the word "No" if they were not.

Yes
———— 59. The blessing of the bread
———— 60. The incensing of the offerings
———— 61. The breaking of the bread
———— 62. "This is My Body"
———— 63. Giving thanks
———— 64. "This is My Blood"
———— 65. The distribution of Communion
———— 66. The reading of the Gospel
———— 67. "Do this in remembrance of Me"
———— 68. Kneeling during the Last Gospel

E

Directions: In the blank at the left write the letter "P" if the prayer or chant is from the Proper of the Missal, that is, if it changes with the feast. Write the letter "O" if the prayer or chant is from the Ordinary of the Mass, that is, if it remains the same

O
———— 69. The Confiteor
———— 70. The Judica me
———— 71. The Introit
———— 72. The Gloria
———— 73. The Collect
———— 74. The Epistle
———— 75. The Gospel
———— 76. The Gradual

_________ 77. The Munda cor meum
_________ 78. The Creed
_________ 79. The Offertory Antiphon
_________ 80. The Lavabo prayer
_________ 81. The Common Preface
_________ 82. The Sanctus
_________ 83. The Diptychs
_________ 84. The prayers of Consecration
_________ 85. The Communion Antiphon
_________ 86. The Secrets
_________ 87. The Postcommunion
_________ 88. The Pater Noster
_________ 89. The Last Gospel
_________ 90. The prayer of offering of the Victim to God

F

Directions: In the blank at the left, write "F" if the ceremony or prayer is from the Mass of the Faithful. Write "C" if it is from the Mass of the Catechumens.

____F____ 91. The Lord's Prayer
_________ 92. The Psalm Judica me
_________ 93. The Collect
_________ 94. The Gradual
_________ 95. The Preface
_________ 96. The Canon
_________ 97. The Introit
_________ 98. The Kyrie
_________ 99. The Orate Fratres
_________ 100. The sprinkling with holy water
_________ 101. The offering of bread and wine
_________ 102. The triple invocation to the Lamb of God
_________ 103. The Epistle
_________ 104. The Gospel
_________ 105. The Creed
_________ 106. The reading of the Diptychs
_________ 107. The Prayer to the Most Holy Trinity

LESSON XXIX

TEST EXERCISE ON THE MASS (*continued*)

G

Directions: In Column II we have the English phrases which correspond closely to the Latin or Hebrew words and phrases in Column I. Place the number in the parentheses at the left of the English phrase in Column II in the parentheses at the left of the Latin phrase in Column I *which matches it.*

Column I	*Column II*
108. (22) Judica me, Deus	(1) Through Christ our Lord
109. ( ) Confiteor	(2) Holy, holy, holy
110. ( ) Amen	(3) Lift up your hearts
111. ( ) Dominus vobiscum	(4) The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ
112. ( ) Et cum spiritu tuo	(5) I will go in unto the altar of God
113. ( ) Oremus	(6) Host
114. ( ) Kyrie eleison	(7) And to us sinners also
115. ( ) Gloria in excelsis Deo	(8) The peace of the Lord be always with you
116. ( ) Deo gratias	(9) Brethren, pray
117. ( ) Munda cor meum	(10) Be mindful, O Lord
118. ( ) In nomine Patri et Filii et Spiritus Sancti	(11) In communion with
119. ( ) Gloria tibi, Domine	(12) Our Father
120. ( ) Credo	(13) World without end

121. (   ) Suscipe, sancte Pater
122. (   ) Offerimus tibi, Domine
123. (   ) Lavabo
124. (   ) Suscipe, sancta Trinitas
125. (   ) Orate, fratres
126. (   ) Memento Domine
127. (   ) Communicantes
128. (   ) Pater noster
129. (   ) Per omnia saecula saeculorum
130. (   ) Libera nos a malo
131. (   ) Ecce Agnus Dei
132. (   ) Domine, non sum dignus
133. (   ) Ite Missa est
134. (   ) Benedicamus Domino
135. (   ) Requiescant in pace
136. (   ) Et Verbum caro factum est
137. (   ) Per Christum Dominum nostrum
138. (   ) Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
139. (   ) Sursum corda
140. (   ) Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi
141. (   ) Introibo ad altare Dei
142. (   ) Hostia
143. (   ) Nobis quoque peccatoribus
144. (   ) Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum

(14) And the Word was made flesh
(15) Glory be to Thee, O Lord
(16) Deliver us from evil
(17) May they rest in peace
(18) Behold the Lamb of God
(19) Let us bless the Lord
(20) Lord, I am not worthy
(21) Go, you are dismissed
(22) Judge me, O God
(23) Receive, O Holy Trinity
(24) I confess
(25) Glory to God in the Highest
(26) Thanks be to God
(27) So be it
(28) I will wash
(29) We offer unto Thee, O Lord
(30) Cleanse my heart
(31) The Lord be with you
(32) Receive, O Holy Father
(33) I believe
(34) And with thy spirit
(35) Let us pray
(36) Lord, have mercy on us
(37) In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost

H

Directions: In Column I is the name of a prayer or chant in the Mass. In Column II is a description of it. Place the number of the reference in Column II in the parentheses at left of the prayer named in Column I *which matches it.*

Column I

145. (10) The Introit
146. ( ) Collects
147. ( ) Offertory Antiphon
148. ( ) Communion Antiphon
149. ( ) Postcommunion
150. ( ) Gloria
151. ( ) The Sequences
152. ( ) The Tract
153. ( ) The Epistle
154. ( ) The Preface
155. ( ) The Gradual
156. ( ) The Creed

Column II

(1) A prayer of thanksgiving which introduces the Canon
(2) A prayer or chant which gets its name from the Latin for "step"
(3) A prayer said after the Mass proper is over which, on most days of the year, is from the Gospel of Saint John
(4) Prayers said in a low voice just before the beginning of the Canon
(5) A song of praise and blessing after the Preface
(6) The words in which we state our faith
(7) Priest and people confess their sins
(8) A triple prayer in honor of the Trinity which implores mercy
(9) A prayer which the priest says after Mass
(10) Verses from the Psalms read just before the Kyrie
(11) Lessons read chiefly from the letters of Saint Paul
(12) An intermediary chant used during seasons of penance, as Lent

157. (   ) The Confiteor

158. (   ) The Kyrie

159. (   ) The Gospel

160. (   ) Munda cor meum

161. (   ) The Lavabo

162. (   ) The Canon

163. (   ) The Diptychs

164. (   ) The Agnus Dei

165. (   ) Domine, non sum dignus

166. (   ) The Last Gospel

167. (   ) The Secrets

168. (   ) The Sanctus

(13) A prayer in which the priest offers to God the prayers of those present

(14) A chant which in the early Church was sung during the Offertory Procession

(15) The official liturgical thanksgiving after the Communion chant of the Church

(16) A song of joy first sung by the Christmas angels

(17) The teachings of Christ Himself

(18) A hymn of the Mass added to the Alleluia or Tract on certain festivals

(19) A prayer said before the reading of the Gospel for the day

(20) Words said by John the Baptist upon beholding Jesus approaching

(21) The fixed prayer of the Church which encloses the Consecration

(22) The verses from the psalms said when the priest washes his hands

(23) Prayers of remembrance which in the early Church were read from folding tablets of wood, ivory and metal

(24) The words of the centurion who begged Jesus to heal his servant

169. ( ) The Communicantes	(25) A commemoration of the Church Triumphant, or the saints
170. ( ) Canticle of the Three Young Men	(26) A chant which in the early Church was sung as the people received Holy Communion

LESSON XXX

TEST EXERCISE ON THE MASS (*concluded*)

I

Directions: Underline "Yes" or "No" after each question asked below.

171. Does the priest represent Christ at the Mass? [✓ Yes] No
172. Did Christ say the first Mass on Calvary? Yes No
173. Were any of the Apostles present at the first Mass? Yes No
174. Did Christ institute two sacraments at the Last Supper? Yes No
175. Did He command His disciples to repeat His actions once every two years? Yes No
176. Is the Offertory the most solemn part of the Mass? Yes No
177. Does our Lord leave His place in heaven at the Consecration? Yes No
178. Are the Body and Blood of Christ actually offered at the Offertory? Yes No
179. Are the appearances of bread and wine after the Consecration called species? Yes No
180. Is our Lord whole and entire under the Bread alone? Yes No
181. Does Christ die again during the Sacrifice of the Mass? Yes No
182. Does the priest put water in the wine in the chalice? Yes No
183. Do the people have any part in the Mass? Yes No
184. Is the Mass of the Faithful the instruction part of the Mass? Yes No
185. Is the Mass of the Catechumens the more important part of the Mass? Yes No

186. Is the Epistle part of the Mass of the Faithful? Yes No
187. Is the Sacrifice of the Mass the same Sacrifice as that of Calvary? Yes No
188. Does God become present on the altar during the Mass of the Catechumens? Yes No
189. Does the priest say the Confiteor from the Missal? Yes No
190. Is the Blessed Mother mentioned in the Mass? Yes No
191. Does the Preface introduce the Canon of the Mass? Yes No
192. Is the Canon one single prayer? Yes No
193. Is the Canon said aloud? Yes No
194. Is the Mass offered to the Mother of God? Yes No
195. Do we stand when the Gospel is read? Yes No
196. Is there a prayer to the Holy Ghost during the Offertory? Yes No
197. May we offer ourselves to God with the bread and wine? Yes No
198. May we join our intentions with that of the priest during the reading of the diptychs? Yes No
199. Was the Our Father composed by Saint John? Yes No
200. Is the Our Father part of the Canon of the Mass? Yes No

Perfect Score: 100 (*200* divided by *2*)

My Score: ——— (*Number right,* divided by *2*)